

The Truth  
About  
Spiritualism


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William S. Sadler M.D.



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# THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

BY

✓  
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## PREFACE

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MORE than twenty-five years ago, I began the study of spiritualism, and down through the years these investigations have been continued along many different lines. From time to time, I have had under my professional care clairvoyants, mediums, trance talkers, automatic writers, and other sorts of so-called psychics and sensitives. As the result of years of observation and treatment of these peculiar individuals, as well as by attendance upon the seances of many mediums in this country and in Great Britain, I came, years ago, to form certain definite opinions regarding the phenomena of spiritualism, and accordingly, about a dozen years ago, began to give public addresses touching upon the various phases of the phenomena and philosophy of spiritualism.

Owing to the great interest in this subject following the World War, my publishers, A. C. McClurg & Co., have asked me, in addition to my larger work on <sup>1</sup>*Spiritualism*, to revise and prepare the manuscript of my lecture on spiritualism for a briefer and possibly more popular presentation of the subject for the average reader.

Those wishing to pursue this subject further, are referred to the larger work previously mentioned, in which will be found a far more complete and full presentation of both the physical phenomena and the philosophical or psychologic aspects of the psychic manifestations of modern spiritualism.

WILLIAM S. SADLER.

533 DIVERSEY PARKWAY, CHICAGO.

*September, 1923.*

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# The Truth About Spiritualism

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## CHAPTER 1

### WHY IS SPIRITUALISM

I HAVE written this to tell about my experience with spiritualism, an experience which covers a quarter of a century; and at the very beginning it behooves us to pause and seek for an answer to the question as to why many people are so intensely interested in spiritualism. Why are we so captivated with the theories and claims respecting the ability of the dead to return to this world and communicate with the living? In a word, why is spiritualism?

In explanation of the popular interest in modern spiritualism, there are a number of different reasons:

#### 1. IMMORTALITY — A UNIVERSAL HOPE

The belief in immortality, the desire to live again, is a well-nigh universal instinct or longing of mankind. It seems to be inherent in the majority of the human species. This hope for life beyond the grave seems to be a part of the average man's mental equipment.

The primitive savage, as well as the cultured men and women of a higher civilization, all entertain, in varying degrees, this hope of survival after death, this

natural longing for immortality. And so it seems that, except for those cases of the intellectual stoic, those educated and disciplined minds who have so extensively trained themselves in artificial channels of thought — I say, except for these products of modern education, all mankind intensely desires to live again.

Just as self-preservation seems to be the first law of Nature, the longing for immortality seems to be the first hope of the unfolding and expanding intelligence of the human species. To preserve our lives is the consummate desire of today, but to survive after death is the supreme hope for the future.

All primitive peoples believe in and worship a deity of some sort. No matter what may be the philosophic nature of their beliefs in immortality, all the tribes and races of mankind indulge their faith in a Happy Hunting Ground, in Paradise and Purgatory, so that in some form or other they have acquired a belief in an existence of some sort in the Great Beyond on the other side of the grave.

In this connection it is interesting to note that we do not find any great and dominant instinct, any universal appetite or longing, hunger or thirst, which has become a part of human life, without at the same time discovering that means have been provided for the satisfaction of these natural longings and biologic instincts. We find at hand the means to satisfy our physical, social, and sex cravings, those longings which

have become a part of men's lives; and so, no matter what may be the real origin of our spiritual instinct and the desire to survive death — I say, no matter what may be the real beginning of these beliefs in a future existence, it would seem but philosophic consistency to believe that the all-wise spiritual forces of the universe must, in all consistency, have made some adequate provision for the satisfaction of these spiritual longings which are so deeply implanted in the hearts of mankind.

*The Belief in Spirits.* Let me make it clear, at the very beginning of this book, that I am not a materialist, I am not a fatalist, as these terms are commonly understood. I must freely admit my belief in the existence of invisible and spiritual forces, though I realize that the frontiers of science are being constantly advanced — that many things which we once regarded as spiritual we now regard as natural. Nevertheless, I believe in the existence of spirits, but that has nothing directly to do with the claims of spiritualism regarding the return of the dead to our world, to communicate with the living. Just because I admit the fact that I am not a materialist, does not in any sense make me a spiritualist, as regards these matters pertaining to the return of discarnate spirits to communicate with the living. In all my professional career I have never witnessed what might be called a Godless deathbed scene. I well remember the Irishman who proposed to die cursing



God, but when, in the small hours of the morning he was told that he would probably never live to see the sun rise again, and when this verdict was confirmed by two consulting physicians, then he ordered us all from the room and directed his nurse to send for the priest.

In our every thought we figure out that this life, if that is all there is to it, is not worth while — it is too tragic. The struggle is too short and bitter, the goal is too disappointing. That such a marvelously wrought mechanism as the physical man, and such an intricate and surpassingly wonderful thing as the human mind — to say nothing of man's higher moral and spiritual nature — should all be created and assigned just to traverse this "vale of tears" for "three score years and ten," and then that it should all end — terminate in a never-ending sleep — I say, it seems to the average individual that a Mind, Power, or Force that was able to qualify as the architect and builder of the universe — even the little that we know of it — that the Intelligent Energy which functions as the Supreme Upholder and Director of the world in which we live and its associated planets; it seems only reasonable to believe that such a Power would be too all-wise to be guilty of such uneconomical conduct, such wasteful extravagance, and such short-sighted planning, as would be the case if death were the goal of life — if death were but the entrance into one long, black, impenetrable and never-ending state of unconsciousness.



“If a man die, shall he live again?” is a question as old as Job. Great minds in all the past have tugged away to demonstrate the immortality of the soul. From the days when the Egyptian priests consulted the oracles of Isis, and the Greeks sought truth from Eleusis, there has been a belief in the evocation of the spirits of the dead.

## 2. SPIRITUALISM LIKE FALLING IN LOVE

The belief in life after death seems to be just about as natural to human beings as the tendency to “fall in love,” and I find it is just about as hard to reason with people in the one case as in the other, simply because in both cases we are dealing with a deep-seated and fundamental human emotion. I find it just about as profitable to argue with a real spiritualist as I do to argue with a young couple who are in love and determined to get married. When a young couple tell me they are going to pray over their love affair, I always tell them to save their time and go ahead, because I have found that when a couple of infatuated youths pray about their love affairs, the Lord always answers yes. And so I find it with the spiritualist, *once a believer always a believer*; no matter what happens, they excuse the blunders of their favorite medium and go on believing.

The spiritualists develop the same infatuation for their belief in the return of the dead that a young

man develops for his sweetheart, and both the young lover and the devotee of spiritism, fired by these psychic phantasies born of their unconscious wishes, become blindly devoted to the object of their affection and are quite oblivious to all reasoning on the one hand and inconsistencies of philosophy on the other.

In a word, one of the explanations of our devotion to modern spiritualism is what the psychologists call "the will to believe." Even primitive, prehistoric men were more or less religious, and indulged in the hope for immortality, as we discover when we dig up their skeletons and note that many of them practiced some sort of burial ceremonial, indicative of their belief in a future existence.

The hope of surviving death is the desire of the ages, and so there has grown up in mankind a sort of instinctive will to believe this thing.

The instinct to live is so intense, is so biologic and innate, that it extends over and beyond the span of our natural life on earth, and seeks to lay hold of another life beyond — seeks to merge life on this earth with that of a future existence. And I have found this desire existing in varying form in all classes of my patients, from the humblest and most ignorant patient found in the dispensary to the most highly educated and intellectual men and women of private practice.

We must not forget, even in the case of our modern civilized men, that human beings are controlled by

their hearts and not by their heads. We are emotional creatures, and there is no greater emotion in human experience than the desire to live again.

### 3. THE REACTION TO MATERIALISM

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that during the past fifty years materialistic tendencies have made great progress in the minds of the more intelligent and thinking elements of society. And in view of this it is not strange that the World War should have precipitated the present day reaction of spiritualism. The channels of religious consolation patronized by the last generation have been more or less blocked to the thirsty souls of today. This change in the spiritual complexion of the people is probably due to three distinct causes:

a. A general breakdown in the religious tendencies and authority of former generations.

b. The spread of socialism and kindred teachings which are devoid of a spiritual background and setting; and

c. The rapid spread of materialistic tendencies, due to the enormous development of the physical sciences.

Science starts out with the theory that the mind has nothing in it except that which enters through the physical senses; but sooner or later even the scientist himself is brought face to face with intellectual phenomena which it is difficult to explain on the theory



that thinking can only have its origin in sensory feeling. There is an uncanny creative element in the human mind; there is a phantasy of imagination that tends to assert itself over and above that residue of mind and memory which we conceive as having had its origin in the physical impressions of the special senses. And so even the physical scientists and the psychologists tend sooner or later to gravitate to that place where they are willing to admit the possibility, if not the probability, of the existence of spiritual forces in connection and contact with the human mind. And thus, without suitable principles for guidance, the way is wide open for the intrusion of some phase of spiritualism.

*Recurring Waves of Spiritism.* As already intimated a perusal of the philosophic tendencies of mankind serves to show that the race tends to oscillate, in generation cycles, from one extreme to the other in its philosophic beliefs. A period of superstition and credulity is usually followed by a period of materialistic reaction. The spiritism and mysticism of the dark ages culminated in the rank infidelity and materialism of the French Revolution. On the other hand the materialistic tendencies of the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the great expansion and development of the physical sciences and the increasing tendency of science to lean toward materialism and fatalism, led to an inevitable outbreak of mystic



cultism at the dawn of the twentieth century, as outlined in the teachings of Christian Science, and still further and more recently in the unprecedented tendencies and leanings toward spiritualism and other efforts to communicate with the dead and otherwise to get in touch with the invisible world beyond the grave.

I believe that our present dilemma, the spiritualistic maze into which so many earnest souls are creeping, has been brought about by a failure to recognize the proper provinces of science and religion. Each has its own sphere, and the failure of the one to recognize the domain and function of the other, has done much to bring confusion to the popular mind, and to twist and distort the philosophy of common sense in the souls of the common people.

Just about the time the scientists succeed in convincing the people that there is no spirit, that all is material; the average individual having fed on these dry husks of materialism and finding an ever-present spiritual thirst which is not quenched by such scientific dogma, soon accumulates such a desire for comfort, as the result of the sorrows of living, that when he contemplates the future and feels that when he dies he is going to be but like the cats and dogs and beasts of the earth, to rot in the ground and be no more; in a time of unusual stress or strain, during a season of great sorrow or other severe disappointment — these mentally distraught and spiritually famished individ-

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uals settle their philosophic difficulties by suddenly abandoning the ship of scientific materialism, and they startle us by taking one grand plunge into the sophistries and delusions of Christian Science, Spiritualism, or some other mystic, metaphysical cult.

### 4.    LOOKING BEYOND THE GRAVE

It is difficult for us to give up our loved ones. We become attached to our fellow mortals, and we dislike forever to part company with our earthly companions. The spiritualists are endeavoring to live over again the life-companionship of their departed friends and loved ones. In their phantasies and dreams they see them again about the house, and with them again they traverse the old familiar paths and roads, while in imagination they hear their voices, and feel the hand-clasp and embrace of those long since departed. They resurrect the love letters of former days and read and re-read them. After our loved ones leave us, we, in our own concept of their characteristics, endow them with many beautiful things which they but faintly possessed when on earth, and we allow to fade out of our memories those disagreeable things we were wont to recognize as a part of their personality when they were with us.

After our friends have left us, we collect their photographs, place them on our dressers and hang them on our walls, and thus we seek to keep the memory of

these dear ones alive in our minds. When we are thus able to visualize the departed, it does not seem strange that the human mind with its creative imagination, should dare to go one step further, and seek actually to hear the voices — actually to communicate with the supposed spirits of those who have left us.

There is a persistent determination, on the part of most people, to cling to their dead — they simply will not let them go. This state of mind is reflected in the actual behavior of many persons who throw their arms about the departed at the last funeral rites with violent weeping, clinging to their lifeless forms to the very last moment. It is not strange, then, that after the form of clay has been laid away in the cemetery, intelligent beings begin to ask, concerning their deceased loved ones: “Where are they? What are they doing? Can they come back? Do they come back to our world? Are they cognizant of what we are doing? Are they conscious of our sorrow for them? Do they know how much we miss them?”

It is only natural that a curious and speculative human brain should indulge such thoughts. And as the world of today asks itself these questions concerning the dead and departed, the answer seems to be coming back in a flood of spiritistic literature and a deluge of spiritualistic performances.

In every place, and all the time, almost everybody is today discussing some phase of the occult — something



pertaining more or less to spiritualism. If it is not our favorite medium we attend upon, then it is the ouija board that we experiment with. If it is not clairvoyancy that we dabble with, then it is through the avenue of psychology that we seek to attain to telepathic communication between the minds of the living.

#### 5. COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD

Unquestionably, the vast majority of the common people indulge the desire or curiosity for communicating with the dead. The average person, having passed through some sorrowful bereavement, craves for satisfying assurance that his loved ones have only passed on to enjoy the pleasures of a better world. The bereaved soul is tortured by anxiety and uncertainty, and craves those things which will demonstrate and prove that his loved ones survive death — that they enjoy consciousness beyond the vale.

How eager is the bereaved human to catch a glimpse — to discern even the faintest glimmer — of the light that would testify to life beyond the tomb. This is not strange, since we recognize the almost universal belief in a future life. Why should not those of us who remain behind desire to know where our loved ones are, what they are doing, whether they are in this world or another world? And the answer to these questions can only be found in the guidebooks of the revealed religions or in the messages of the seance room.

Science today offers us no proof of existence beyond the grave. The answers to the many questions which swarm in our minds concerning our dead are only to be found in revealed religion, or in some phase of spiritualism. Therefore, proportionately as the dogma of revealed religion weakens in its hold upon the human mind, to just the extent that men and women drift away from their belief in the theologic teachings and dogmas of their family church connections, they become — if they do not meanwhile develop an independent philosophy concerning such matters — ready and willing candidates for experimenting with spiritualism in their effort to solve the problems of an unseen world and a future life.

There are, then, three sources from which we can look for an answer to our desire to communicate with the dead. They are:

a. *Science*. Science today is noncommittal. It has nothing to offer. To science the dead are dead. Science offers no hope beyond the grave. It stands ready to investigate anything having to do with the material universe and the physical laws of nature, but today science, as such, offers no technique by which the living may communicate with the dead.

b. *Revealed religion*. The revealed religions such as Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, offer little teaching that would encourage us to believe that surviving mortals could hope to communicate with the



spirits of departed friends and relatives. Buddhism certainly holds out no such hope, while it is doubtful even that the teaching of Confucius, with all its burden of ancestor worship as believed by the Chinese, offers any great assurance of the living being able to communicate with the dead.

c. *Spiritualism.* Spiritualism is the only system of religious belief or occult pretension which claims to be able to put the living in communication with the dead, and therein is the secret of its widespread diffusion. Human beings would like to communicate with the dead. Science provides no way, and revealed religion offers no help; therefore they turn to the seance and the medium; but what foolish conduct on the part of intelligent human beings to expect the Witch of Endor to supply us with those realities with which to satisfy our curiosity and quench our spiritual thirst when both religion and science have failed to help us. When the scientist and the philosopher know not the way between the living and the dead, how can we expect to be piloted through these uncertain realms by palmists, astrologers, clairvoyants, and mediums?

#### 6. THE WORLD WAR — DEFENSE REACTIONS

It seems that we are destined to have a revival of spiritualism about once in each generation. More certainly, we have a recurring wave of spiritualism following every great war. And so today we are experiencing

a great wave of spiritism, a great movement in mass psychology, that in many respects seems to outstrip the popular psychology which characterized the folly of the crusaders, or the fanaticism of the witchcraft delusions of past centuries.

Tens of thousands of people — and this is particularly true of the revival of spiritualism in Great Britain — I say, untold thousands of people have lost sons, brothers, husbands, and sweethearts in the bloody battles of the great World War. And these bereaved souls are simply human. They are possessed of this belief in a future life, and as we have already seen, it is only natural that they should long to communicate with their departed loved ones; and it is just this state of affairs that has brought about the present day revival of interest in mediums, spiritualism, etc.

In other words, this movement in mass psychology, as regards spiritualism today, is due to the simple fact that tens of thousands of individuals are indulging in the practice of spiritualism as a sort of *defense reaction* which they unconsciously are putting up to counteract their sense of grief and bereavement, occasioned by the loss of their loved ones. And let us, in this connection, give a little more attention to this question of defense reaction on the part of the individual as the ultimate explanation of manifestations of mass psychology on the part of the public.

The World War shattered so much that was tangible

and that was believed to be the last word in substantiality. It overturned governments; upset the balance of trade; deteriorated currency; shattered ideals of world unity and concord; wrecked centuries old conventions of social classes; placed upon the high seats men and women of daring and vision and commanding ability who had arisen from social levels that supposedly could contribute only bone and brawn to the state; and it swept millions of men to death in trenches and fields of blood and fire, and other millions into the hospitals whence they emerged maimed and battered remnants of their former selves. There is no estimating the weight of such shocks as these. In some way or other, and in all ways together, human nature must bear the strain. It is idle in such circumstances to urge what in some circles has become a byword, that conditions must be adjusted to the natures of men — not the reverse. *Conditions will not be adjusted at once.*

It is intolerable — all this overturning and the sudden snuffing out of young and vigorous friends and kinsmen. In such circumstances we turn our eyes “unto the hills whence cometh our help”; and the men and women of warring countries are said to have crowded the churches. This was a reaction of defense against an unbearable reality; a gesture of reaching out for a life in which blood and fire and separation from loved ones count for nothing because they are not. But many deny its sufficiency. To them the church is for dogma



and convention; not for life and for living. It feeds them with platitudes and their "gorge rises." These folk are the overflow into the half darkened rooms where the seances are held; where the spirits walk and rap and talk.

*Different Sorts of Defense Reactions.* In these days we hear a good deal about *defense reactions*. For instance, they tell us that our interest in sports and our devotion to games is an unconscious defense reaction on the part of the common people against the tedious routine and monotony of the daily grind of our commonplace lives. The psychologists tell us that so many people pursue intoxications of various sorts as a defense reaction against the dull and sordid conditions of their daily life, against the humdrum existence and the lack of romance in our common experience. We are told that intoxication, on the one hand, and sports on the other, help us to escape from a real and uninteresting existence into a world of stimulating and entertaining romance.

We are further taught that the bully browbeats his companions because he has an inherent sense of inferiority. He is just "whistling to keep up his courage." The scientists further tell us that a lot of people take up reforms in order to escape temptation. They feel they are weak, and they espouse a good cause in an effort to extricate themselves from danger. It certainly is true that many of the great temperance re-

formers of the last generation had been former victims of alcoholism.

We are further told by the psychologists that much of what we call religion is a defense reaction—an effort on our part to escape a sense of insecurity that attends this life, and that in this connection spiritualism has come in as a sort of substitute for old-fashioned religion; that spiritualism goes a step farther in some respects than religion used to, to satisfy our spiritual longings, in that it not only takes the place of declining religious authority on the one hand, but that it serves in some degree at least as an antidote for the undue prevalence of modern materialism. And so the psychologists are wont to interpret this inner urge—this curiosity and attraction which leads to the seance room — as a sort of defense reaction which so many people are unconsciously indulging as the result of the loss of religious authority over the masses by the theologic dogmas and creeds of the present day.

And so today, just as the ditch digger craves his alcohol, and the grocery clerk seeks his out-of-door sport, as the means of obtaining relief from the tedium of daily life, so in this day of materialistic philosophy, tens of thousands of people are turning away from decadent religion to seek consolation and confirmation of their belief in a future existence at the hands of modern spiritualism. The moment orthodox religion ceases to supply consolation as a defense reaction to the un-



certainty of life, then the doors are open for spiritualism to come in and supply this consolation which religion has failed to give.

And in this connection, it is important to emphasize the fact that we are never critical or rational in our defense reactions. Our defense reactions are largely unconscious, instinctive, and automatic. We just indulge them and enjoy them, we don't stop to do much reasoning about them: And so, if spiritualism is a defense reaction we can be sure about it that the man in the street will not indulge in much logic about it. The emotional woman will not rationalize much about her experiences in the seance room.

#### 7. SPIRITUALISM AN ANCIENT PRACTICE

It would seem, from some ancient accounts, that the modern mediums had nothing on the necromancers of old. The ancient mediums were able to produce practically all the manifestations of the modern seance room, such as lights, sounds, voices, and other physical manifestations. They likewise had wonderful trance talkers and psychic mediums in olden times. The earliest records of spiritualism are probably those of the performance of Egyptian mediums, and the Bible tells us something of the experiences of Moses and Aaron with the magicians and other occult practitioners of old Egypt.

The farther back we go in the study of the history

of civilization, the more we discover of this confusing and debasing superstition, having to do with spooks and spirits, and other sorts of fantastic conception of the probable causes and explanation of commonplace, everyday phenomena. Careful study serves to disclose that the roots of spiritualism are deeply sunk in antiquity. These dark teachings are found with the race at its earliest historic dawn, and there is abundant evidence that superstitions of this sort were a part of the beliefs and practices of even the prehistoric peoples.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, tells us many interesting things about the performance of mediums in his day.

The early Samaritans and Babylonians were steeped in mysticism, ranging from astrology to their numerous attempts by various methods to communicate with the supernatural spirits of the invisible world, as well as with the spirits of departed humans. These practices were prevalent all down through the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, and were well crystallized and had attained the dignity of a cult, or system, by the time we reach the early years of Roman history.

An illustration of the ambiguous nature of spirit communications, of how mediums always play safe in prognosticating the future, is well shown in the case of the message which the Sibylline oracles sent to Maxentius, who inquired as to what the probable fortunes were in his oncoming contest with Constantine. The oracle replied: "On that day the enemy of Rome

will perish," and on the strength of this he went forward to battle, was defeated and drowned when returning to Rome, little realizing that the spirit message might be true, no matter who was defeated.

In the days of Valens, two politicians sought to secure information from a supernatural source as to what their fortunes might be in the succeeding dynasty, but through regular channels of espionage, without any supernatural aid, "the powers that be" got next to the machinations of these politicians, and dragged two of them, Hilarius and Patricius, into court, where, after much punishment, they revealed the source of their information and the methods of securing it. It all sounds very much like a present day ouija board seance.

And so it would appear that the practice of spiritualism—the pretense of establishing communication between the living and the dead—is a very ancient one. From the earliest dawn of history down to the beliefs and practices of the American Red Man, we find the continuous record of the efforts of living men to get in touch with the disembodied spirits of their departed friends—to communicate with the discarnate entities of the wise men of past ages. There is, then, nothing new in the professions and claims of modern spiritualism. As a practice, as a belief, a doctrine, it seems to be just about as old as the race. At least, we find it present in the philosophic teachings of the olden races of all historic times.



## CHAPTER II

### PREPARING THE PUBLIC MIND

SINCE the desire for immortality is well-nigh universal in the human species, and since there exist numerous well organized and quite well known systems of religious belief and other teachings which definitely assert their ability to place living beings in communication with their dead and departed friends, and since human beings are the most highly curious and investigative of all animals; we must recognize that the stage is ideally set to favor the promulgation and spread of the dogmas of spiritualism, or any other cult which claims to be able to draw aside the veil which separates this life from the next, and thus in a measure to satisfy the combined craving for immortality on the one hand and the curiosity which seeks to penetrate the mysteries of the future and the unseen world, on the other hand.

And so, at this time I want to call your attention to the conspiracy of influences and tendencies which so effectively work, consciously and unconsciously, to prepare the mind of the average individual for favorable disposition toward spiritualism.

#### A. THE KINDERGARTEN OF SPIRITUALISM

I have thought best to classify these predisposing

tendencies toward spiritualism after the fashion of our public school system, so our first group of spiritistic tendencies will be called the Kindergarten of Spiritism.

### 1. CHILDLIKE CURIOSITY

The very first step in the kindergarten preparation of the human race to be mistaught and deluded by the sophistries of modern spiritualism, consists in that universal human attribute of inquisitiveness. Curiosity is the fundamental and basic psychologic trait which enables the exponents of both theologic and commercial spiritism to gain their first firm and secure hold upon the human mind.

Without credulity, spiritualism would make little headway. It is pathetic — yes, it is even tragic — to see with what childlike innocence strong minded, highly educated men and women will, without question, and almost without reason, swallow the flimsy evidence and accept the unproved pretensions of spiritualistic mediums, clairvoyants, fortune tellers, and other sorts of soothsayers.

Intelligent men and women, who, in their professions and business callings, would require that suitable evidence be offered in support of any and all propositions submitted for their acceptance or endorsement, will, in the presence of alleged spooks and spirits, accept, as satisfactory, evidence which will in no wise stand the least bit of critical scrutiny.



Curiosity, then, we will put down as the chief element in the soil which the spiritualists cultivate, in which they sow the seed that so successfully and fascinatingly misleads so many thousands of honest but illogical and superficial truth seekers. We must recognize that the average human being does not possess a well trained, disciplined, and logical mind. The majority of mankind are not trained in the science of the laws of evidence, and they are not highly gifted with discriminating judgment and sublime reasoning powers. They, therefore, constitute readymade, ever-receptive, and easily misled mentalities, which in every way lend themselves to becoming easy victims to the supernatural claims and spectacular phenomena of modern spiritualism.

## 2. SUPERSTITION — FEAR PLUS IGNORANCE

The second, and another universal human trait which the spiritualists utilize in their conscious or unconscious business of preying upon unsophisticated humanity, is that psychologic trait which seems almost second human nature, and which we commonly designate by the term *fear*. Fear is a thing which takes root, springs up and flourishes in the human mind, like a weed does in a garden. Ignorance is the powerful fertilizer of fear in the soil of the human mind, and not only is fear in a measure inherent — for we find that children are born with the fear of falling and the fear of

certain sudden, shrill noises—but ignorance, comparatively speaking, is also wellnigh universal; and fear plus ignorance equals superstition; and *superstition*, which is so widespread among the common people, added to the innate curiosity of the race, still further serves to prepare at least ninety per cent of the so-called civilized races for the sophistries and deceptions of spiritualism.

Intelligent and supposedly well educated persons sit down in my office every day and tell me how they will not start a journey on Friday. They also tell me of dozens of other little superstitions, fears, phobias, and obsessions which they indulge, showing that we are a long way from freeing the popular mind of the notion that horseshoes bring good luck, that breaking a looking glass causes seven years of bad luck, or death in the family, not to mention the ill omens of black cats, walking under a ladder, etc., etc.

I well remember being reared in an intelligent community in the State of Indiana, and, as a little shaver, wearing about my neck a bag of asafetida and sulphur which was warranted to keep off disease. And well might it enjoy this reputation, if the bugs themselves possessed an olfactory sense! But it was merely a slight shifting from the superstition of the charms which were worn by some of our not too remote ancestors to drive off devils, which, in their day, were supposed to be the instigators of disease.

As long as the basis of so much of our theologic belief is fear, so long as heredity dooms so many of us to be more or less weakminded, and modern education does so little to train the brains with which inheritance does endow us; then must we expect to find prevailing in the average mind a sufficient amount of fear and ignorance which, combined, create that superstitious state of mind which so beautifully prepares the individual of its indwelling to become a willing dupe and ready victim to the curiosity-satisfying and superstitious-appealing delusions of spiritualism.

### 3. HUMAN TRUSTFULNESS

Not only is the human mind innately curious, and the human being naturally superstitious, but strange to record, the average human being is over-trustful. Many individuals, long since attaining their majority, still possess that trustfulness that characterizes the child, particularly when it comes to matters religious and supposedly supernatural. Not only are we curious, fearful and ignorant, all of which conspire to make us more or less superstitious, but we are also dangerously trustful.

We have been taught to believe in those who teach us in the name of religion, those who speak inspired *ex cathedra*, those who are the mouthpiece of God to their day and generation. And so the very trustfulness of religious faith and loyalty to the theologic creed



serves to lay the foundation in the minds of the common people for their blind belief in the dogmas of spiritism and for their easy deception by the phenomena of spiritualism.

It does not occur to the average person that the spiritualistic medium might be perpetrating an outrageous fraud upon their unsuspecting minds. It does not occur to the common people that the soothsayers may be practicing deception upon them, and it is still more remote from the cogitations of the man in the street that this self-same spiritualistic medium may be self-deceived. At any rate, there is manifest a widespread disposition, on the part of mankind, to lend themselves as willing, trusting and confiding victims to this whole propaganda that centers itself about the pivotal theme of putting this generation of the living into communication with the souls of those who have passed on into the Great Beyond.

#### 4. IGNORANCE OF NATURAL LAW

One great influence which contributes to the perpetuation of superstition in the minds of young people as they grow up toward maturity, is the inability or unwillingness of their elders properly to instruct them in the domain of natural law — in the realm of Nature's commonplace phenomena.

Every opportunity should be embraced to disabuse the mind of the growing child of the notion that the

natural world is jogging along in a haphazard manner, controlled more or less by arbitrary influences. Thunder and lightning, rain and wind, sunshine and vegetation, earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods, should all be accounted for in accordance with the laws of physics and chemistry as they operate in the control and direction of the natural world. In this way much of the fear on which superstition so largely acts in the case of the primitive peoples, when it still persists in the minds of the so-called civilized races, can be greatly reduced so that the mind of the modern man will come to be dominated more by the notion that he lives in a world of law and order, a realm controlled by the precise laws of physics and chemistry; and thus a mental attitude of self-confidence, assurance, and stability, will take the place of those states of fear, apprehension, and insecurity, all of which, as applied to the problem of spiritism, spell superstition.

Much can be done to antidote the youthful tendency toward credulity and superstition, and subsequently the leanings toward spiritualism, by the proper teaching of physiology, psychology, and heredity, not to mention the physical sciences of physics, chemistry and geology. Both religious and secular teachers have it in their power so to direct the teaching of the rising generation as to render it far less susceptible to the sophistries of spiritualistic propaganda when it shall have grown up to maturity.



We should so educate the rising generation that when it beholds a material phenomenon it will first start in, logically and analytically, to seek to find the explanation in physical laws. Our minds should be so trained in the science of logic and the art of analysis as to refuse to accept a spiritual explanation for a physical phenomenon until every known resource of scientific check has been exhausted under the most fair conditions of experimental control and critical observation. Such a state of mind on the part of the observer would preclude the possibility of the commonplace, everyday deceptions now perpetrated by fraudulent mediums by means of their cunning tricks and trumpery.

#### 5. HOBGOBLINS AND OTHER CHILDHOOD FEARS

The fears of early childhood are greatly augmented by the careless words of thoughtless parents, who, in their unthinking methods of discipline, and ignorant technique of child-culture, constantly threaten their little ones with "hobgoblins" and "bogiemen," as an inducement to improve personal conduct and correct general misbehavior, which is such a natural part of the experience of the earlier developmental periods of childhood. It is a crime to frighten a child by taking it to the window at eventide and exclaiming "boo—dark."

What unnatural and unfortunate states of mind are early initiated in the youthful brain by such unthinking remarks as, "The policeman will cut your ears off,"

“the bogieman will get you if you don’t look out,” “if you are naughty the Bad Man will come and get you,” etc., etc. These thoughtless remarks by older members of the family not only contribute to the building up of unwholesome and unnatural fear-complexes in the mind of the growing child, but they also very early suggest to its tender and susceptible soul the idea that things unusual and extraordinary lurk in the dark; that beings inhuman and superhuman stalk about on earth during the night season; that supernatural spirits abound in this realm, and that they are liable to pounce upon us if we depart more or less from the conventional and orthodox pathway of life.

The doctrine of good spirits and evil spirits is very early inculcated into the child’s mind, in the average household of civilized peoples, and thus most fittingly is the foundation laid for their subsequent excursions into the realms of supposedly applied spiritualism, in their efforts to communicate with the dead and to tap the intellectual storehouse of the unseen world.

#### 6. GHOSTS — FEAR OF THE DEAD

Hard it would be indeed to find the individual who cannot remember the cold shivers travelling up and down the youthful spine as they sat about the fireside on long winter evenings and listened to “ghost stories,” as their young minds had indelibly impressed upon them the narratives of haunted houses; and as the years passed

there was added to this ghost-lore the stories of rappings on the bed, shifting of tables, and other hair-raising and heart-agitating tales, all of which were more or less believed by those who told them.

True, the ghost story has sometimes been told as such, but it is a fact that it is all too true that much of this nonsense has been believed by the average citizen; at any rate, these narratives serve to make a profound impression upon the youthful mind and they serve to complete the thorough preparation of the soil and subsoil of the human intellect for subsequent spiritualistic tendencies.

From earliest memory, children recall that their elders manifest a peculiar fear of dead persons. They have so many times heard the statement by some one of the family or their friends that they "would not for anything in the world remain in the room, alone, with a dead person." The average boy or girl grows up with such an exaggerated fear of death and dead people that they often can hardly be persuaded to touch the body of a dead person. And all this unnatural awe and artificial fear of death and dead bodies which has been cultivated, from time immemorial, serves to develop, in the growing mind of our youth, a basic psychology which most admirably serves the purpose of the spiritistic propagandists. This uncalled for fear of the dead produces that state of mental awe that so readily contributes to that credulity and superstition which is so



essential to preparing the mind, in later life, for the deceptions and delusions of spiritualistic phenomena.

The belief in ghosts, then, is the final step in the kindergarten of spiritism. It serves to round out those influences which will invariably tend to make spiritualism attractive to the shallow and unthinking elements of our population. When you believe in ghosts, you are about ready, psychologically speaking, to get out of the kindergarten class of spiritualists, and are qualified to take up your further course in the grades of what might be called the "Common School of Spiritualism."

#### B. THE COMMON SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALISM

Having passed through the kindergarten stage of curiosity, ignorance, superstition, childhood fears, ghosts, and the fear of the dead, the average human being is well qualified to begin the next steps in the commonplace and conventional training of the growing mind to become a believer in, and a victim of, spiritualism.

##### 1. MEDICAL SUPERSTITION

Unfortunately, we doctors, in the past, have been unconscious contributors to the credulity of our patients. We have been wont to look wise and act solemn, to write mysterious prescriptions in unknown Latin for supposedly powerful and potent medicines



which the patient, without understanding anything of the laws of cause and effect, would swallow in ignorance and with more or less reverent awe, and straightway expect to get well — expect a sudden, mysterious, and almost miraculous change of symptoms.

The superstitious awe and reverence with which the family physician, in a passing generation, was held in esteem by the average household, while beautiful to recall and sublime to contemplate, was, nevertheless, but a perpetuation of that tendency of bygone times in which the common people were priest-ridden, grossly misled, shamefully dominated, by the shrewder and more sagacious elements of their day and generation, who assumed the prerogatives of religious teacher and medical practitioner, and in these combined roles directed the management of their sufferings on earth and sought to control their spiritual destiny when they had passed on into another world.

The medical profession is just beginning to rid itself of these unfair practices and superstitious tendencies. Today the physician is becoming more of a teacher, instructing his patients in the laws of living, as they pertain to the realms of mind and body, thus pointing the sick toward the stability of natural law as the security and source of cure, leading them away from the tendencies of self-drugging and devotion to patent medicines.

The doctors of this and coming generations can do

much to antidote the conventional tendency to produce, in the popular mind, those states of psychology which so easily lend themselves to unfounded and credulous beliefs in spiritualistic phenomena. The doctor can do much to teach his patients a proper understanding of the laws of life, to have them understand that pathology is but perverted physiology, that disease is but the phenomenon of health manifesting itself under abnormal or difficult conditions, that death is but a cessation of the forces of life.

Medical men and women owe it to their clients to help them in overcoming this wellnigh universal tendency to look with fear and awe upon death, and with dread and superstition upon the dead. The family physician, when death has appeared in a family or in the neighborhood, could take some abnormal boy or girl, and with five minutes' instruction and by accompanying them into the death chamber, save them lifelong suffering and nervous tendency on the one hand, from the standpoint of their personal physical health; as well as to deliver them, perchance, from that unnatural fear of death which serves to make them such ready victims to some sort of spiritistic propaganda in their later years.

## 2. "MAGNETIC HEALING"

If medical superstition, or fear and ignorance regarding ordinary medical practices, constitutes the first

grade in the common school of preparation for spiritualism, magnetic healing may be said to constitute the second grade. We commonly hear certain persons spoken of as having a "magnetic personality." Here our ignorance of the laws of psychology and the means by which one person influences other persons, leads to an erroneous belief that certain persons possess some sort of influence which is commonly spoken of as "magnetism."

It is but a step from this belief in "magnetic personality," as we meet it in ordinary social and commercial intercourse, to the superstitious belief in the ability of certain persons to utilize this possession as a means of healing disease; and in this way there grows up a belief in "magnetic healing" — a notion that certain persons can cure disease by laying hands on the afflicted.

The phenomenon of life, health, healing, and disease, not to say death, must be put upon a simple, plain, and practical basis of natural law. The mysticism and superstition of health and disease must be dissipated as a part of the educational program of rearing our sons and daughters, so that they will grow up comparatively free from those superstitious tendencies which predispose them to spiritualism in their later times of distress and dismay.

### 3. PALMISTRY AND ASTROLOGY.

The belief that some extraordinary individual can gaze into the palm of your hand and then proceed to



delineate character, diagnose disease, and foretell in detail all the exigencies and emergencies of the future, not to mention the pretension of prophecy relating to business affairs, love, marriage, and divorce — all but serve to indicate the inherent credulity of mankind, and to show just why the average man or woman is so easily imposed upon by the flimsy pretenses and performances of spiritualism.

The ease with which some apparently intelligent persons are led to believe that their life, career, and eternal destiny are controlled by the juxtaposition of the starry hosts at the time of their birth constitutes still further evidence of human gullibility, and indicates how willing most people are to be deceived and misled by commonplace superstition and the claims of those who make their living by foisting upon the public the delusions of supernatural sophistry.

Just when astrology got mixed up with medicine is hard to say, but it was certainly a prominent part of both the healing art and religious worship, back in the earliest Chaldean periods. But the peculiar part of the whole belief is its persistence down to the present day. There is sufficient public interest in this thing to lead Metropolitan dailies to carry a regular column devoted to astrology, just as they do one devoted to health, beauty hints, cookery, baseball, etc.

Ancient superstition lingers long in the human mind. In spite of our agricultural colleges, you can still find



farmers who are wont to plant their potatoes in the light of the moon, and we still meet with the sad-eyed, downcast youth who feels that his adventures in either business or matrimony are doomed to failure because he was born under the sway of an adverse starry constellation.

And the net result of all this thing is but to serve the purpose of further preparing the human mind for its continued enslavement to the superstitious fears and dogmas of past ages, and to pave the way for the subsequent appearance of the more colossal spiritistic deceptions and delusions, involving not only the health of man's body and the peace of his mind, but unsettling his intellectual equilibrium, and even jeopardizing his eternal welfare.

#### 4. FORTUNE TELLING.

As our youth progress in the modern maze of superstitious deceptions and psychic delusions, they soon arrive at the fourth grade of the common, or preparatory school of spiritism, and find there their teachers, the fortune tellers, all ready further to upbuild and foster these credulous complexes and still further to enslave their ignorant minds to beliefs in mysticism and fears of the supernatural.

In the practice of my profession, I am constantly meeting with apparently intelligent individuals whose whole careers have been wrecked and ruined by the

fears and misgivings generated at some time or other in their lives by contact with a fortune teller, who predicted that some dire calamity or devastating catastrophe would overtake them at some future time.

The state of mind and emotion that dominates the average person as they go into the presence of the fortune teller, the trumpery of the environment, the dimness of the light, the whole atmosphere of the occasion is such as to appeal to these primitive fears, and arouse the lingering superstition that still pervades the human mind; and thus every influence of this sort serves but to strengthen those latent superstitious leanings of the race, and also to divert these tendencies into those channels of thought and avenues of emotion that tend to make them more and more susceptible to the notion of getting information from a supernatural source, and of securing advice and guidance through extraordinary and unusual channels.

The fortune tellers are all advance agents for spiritualism. They are the forerunners of the medium, and it is but one step from seeking unearned knowledge at the hands of the fortune teller, to crossing the street to get a more dependable and higher class of information from the medium who professes to be able to put us in communication with the savants and sages of a departed age; who claim to be able to bring up for our instruction and guidance, the dead and departed of our own day and generation.

We have been taught, as a part of our theologic upbringing, that in times past the Supreme Being spake to holy men of old. We have been taught to respect and reverence the prophets and to believe their prophecies. What more natural drift of human reasoning, in its superficial channels, than to conclude that if men of ancient times could contact with the supernatural sources of knowledge and communicate with the fount of supernatural wisdom, that perhaps after all there may be some truth in the claims of those who profess to peer into the future, and who will, if their palms are crossed with silver, deign to divulge their vision to us; and thus might we be able to occupy a position of vantage, being in possession of knowledge extra-human and wisdom supernatural.

The fortune telling craze is a very integral part of the life of the common people. It is not merely the quaint, brilliantly-garbed gypsy who indulges in this art, but it is more or less of a serious pastime in many circles of society.

#### 5. CLAIRVOYANCY

But the fortune tellers were but the commonplace preliminary to the next step, the fifth grade of our common school of preparatory training for the deceptions of spiritism — the clairvoyants. These mystic, psychic souls, the seventh daughters of seventh sons, these shrewd and sagacious psychic profiteers, born



with a veil over the face, are regarded with superstitious awe by tens of thousands of otherwise seemingly intelligent men and women. How often we hear a well educated person speak of some other individual as being a "psychic." How common is the belief of one part of the race that the other possesses some extra-intellectual source of information regarding human affairs in general, and individual destiny in particular.

I have had under my care, at one time or another, many clairvoyants, psychics, and other of these supposedly extraordinary individuals. In most instances I have found them to be mediocre individuals of little education, but who possessed an inherent sagacity, an inborn shrewdness, not to say ability, that conspired to give them a peculiar and sometimes intuitive insight into human nature. They are often good judges of temperament and character, and they, like the palmists, sometimes when looking into the plantar surface of the hand, indulge in frequent and searching glances at the face. As one clairvoyant told me: "We hold the hands but we read the face."

It will be observed that most clairvoyants are women, for it is a well known fact that women usually possess more of this intuitive ability to discern human nature as compared with men. Some of the specialists in the study of ductless glands tell us that this is because women have a larger posterior pituitary; that man possesses a larger anterior lobe and is therefore more



gifted in analytical reason and more reliable in mature judgment; but woman, because of this fact that she has a superior posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, has more ability when it comes to sizing up and prognosticating human character. At any rate, most of the clairvoyants are women, and the majority who have been under my professional care have been able to offer but little explanation regarding their supposed abilities. Indeed, it is very difficult sometimes, in these clairvoyant cases, to determine and judge between those who are insane and those who are merely victims of some minor dissociation disturbances or some major disorder of personality.

#### 6. CRYSTAL GAZING AND SHELL HEARING

We are wont to smile at the crystal gazers and the shell listeners. But they are still with us. Just as surely as there are to be found a class of people who are natural born gamblers — and not at all a small class, by the way — persons who still confidently expect to obtain their fortune by chance, who will never be weaned from the idea that you can, if you are shrewd enough, get something for nothing; who will live and die ever risking their fortune on the wheel of chance; so we have a natural born group of men and women, who, instead of subjecting their minds to rigorous training, stern discipline; who, instead of gaining an education by laborious study and long-continued appli-

cation, still believe that they will in time, through their shrewdness and sagacity, get in contact with some extraordinary source of information that will enable them instantly to gain riches, happiness, health and fame.

Those superstitious individuals, instead of harnessing up their brain power and utilizing to the full their intellectual capacity, believe that the secrets of business success, the winning of my fair lady's hand, domestic tranquillity, and even health and happiness are to be secured from those vagaries and images which may be caused to fleet across the human brain as the result of eye-strain and long continued, devout gaze into the substance of an inert glass ball.

If we can hope to gain some coveted intelligence by listening at the aperture of a sea-shell, how much more likely are we to gain valuable knowledge if a spiritualistic medium can let us hear the very voice of a dead and departed friend. If crystal gazing can afford us visions or apparitions pleasant to look upon, or able to contribute to our happiness and success, how much more likely are we to be directed aright if we can gaze upon the shadowy, luminous outline — ghost forms — of the departed great men and women of this or another generation, and through their contacts with this real and living world of ours, receive their instructions and guidance, receive their answers to our questions, and feel their benediction rest upon our very soul.

And thus, when we seriously analyze the psychology of all these mystic performances, whose continuance rests upon the credulity and superstition of the popular mind, we see they are but stepping stones which lead us on toward spiritualism as the superior channel and the supreme culmination of these vague tendencies and efforts to secure unearned knowledge, and to possess ourselves of supernatural information.

#### 7. RELICS AND SHRINES

As we enter the seventh grade of our preparatory school of spiritualism, we again come in contact with a strong religious atmosphere surrounding our sacred relics and the shrines of miracle-making reputation. In all ages and at all times, there have existed health delusions and healing deceptions, and the present age is no exception. From time immemorial relics have been associated with health and disease. The bodies of some of the saints have been reputed to possess health-giving properties; even to touch the tomb of some of the saints was reported to cure disease.

A concoction made from a piece of tombstone of a good man was supposed, at one time, to cure disease when everything else had failed. For some diseases it is alleged that it is a sure cure to lick the tombstone of a saint—nothing being said, of course, about the danger of catching the disease of any predecessor, who may have previously deposited the microbes of his mala-



dy thereon, while in this same way seeking deliverance.

Our sane and sober ancestors believed that to kiss the temple floors whereon the saints had trod was supposed to confer extraordinary healing power. Of course it will be argued that we are more intelligent in this day and generation. But are we? Ethnologists tell us that the Old Man of Cromagnon<sup>1</sup> had just about as much brain capacity as we have. And while, on the whole, we have made great progress in material skill and mechanical cunning, the average man, from the recent tests made in the United States Army, is shown to be only about twelve or thirteen years of age, mentally, and therefore is not possessed of any extraordinary reasoning power or analytical ability which would cause him to stand out as in any way superior to his ancestors of even a remote age.

#### 8. THE MAGICIANS

Who does not enjoy spending an entertaining evening watching, and being fooled by, a master magician? From childhood, we have enjoyed the spectacular, the elusive, the mysterious. From our earliest memory, we recall those moments of keen anticipation and inexpressible joy as we watched the magician pluck coins out of the air or drag forth wriggling rabbits from the coat collars of our embarrassed townsmen.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cro-Magnon type lived in South Western Europe at least 25,000 years ago.



Barnum spoke the truth when he said, "The people like to be humbugged." Now, it is true that our boys and girls, as they grow up, learn that much of what the magician does is by sleight-of-hand technique, by legerdemain. At the same time, the magician always carries about him, by his very personal appearance, his advertising posters, and some of those things which he says and does during his performance—I say, he suggests the idea and portrays the atmosphere of the supernatural. One magician advertises his performance by a poster which shows a little red devil whispering in his ear.

The magicians are unconscious purveyors to credulity, superstition and belief in the possibility of commonplace contact with the supernatural, even though many of them sincerely intend just the opposite. The very fact that our youth are able as they grow up, to duplicate some of the magician's tricks, but cannot duplicate others, tends to raise the question of the possibility of the utilization of some of the unknown or supernatural forces in the perpetration of the more elaborate of the magician's stunts. There are a great many earnest people who will not go, even today, to a magician's performance, because they believe he is in league with devils — that there is something dangerously unChristian about the whole affair.

The magicians must, of course, keep the technique of their tricks secret, or they would not fascinate and allure the public. We do not enjoy seeing a trick per-

petrated upon us if we understand the details of its performance. It is our ignorance of the technique that attracts and entertains us. We are not allured by the obvious and the commonplace.

It is interesting, in this connection, to note that the magicians of olden times belonged to the priesthood — that the modern magician is a sort of secular descendant of the sacerdotal workers of a bygone age. These ancient wonder-workers claimed to be able to relieve suffering and cure disease by supernatural methods. Alexander the Great is said always to have had one of these medicine men connected with his staff, and Nero was an ardent pupil of the Magi of his day.

It must be clear that not one but many — and before we have finished, we shall show still others — influences and agencies are at work which, all taken together, serve to create a mental state easy of approach by the technique employed by spiritualistic mediums. Thus, after having discussed those kindergarten or early influences so basic in the psychology of man, as embraced in fear, superstition, curiosity, and trustfulness, we have come on down through a group of eight commonplace practices which we have called the common, or preparatory school for spiritualism, ending with the magician; and next we will proceed to a further study along these lines, by taking up a group of influences which we may appropriately denominate the “high school of spiritism.”

## C. THE HIGH SCHOOL OF SPIRITISM

Having methodically studied those influences of earlier life which contribute to the mystic tendencies of the human mind, it will next be in order to consider some of the influences of a more advanced nature, which likewise predispose their students and practitioners to the nefarious teachings and tendencies of the occult sects.

## 1. DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

There can be little doubt that, from the earliest dawn of reason the phantasms of the dream world have had much to do with shaping human thought and philosophy in its waking moments. Undoubtedly, the vague symbolism, the mystic atmosphere, and the unreality of many persons and objects recalled from the dream experience, has had a great deal to do on the one hand with the evolution of primitive religion, and has exerted an undoubted influence on the other hand toward predisposing mankind naturally to incline, in his philosophy, toward a belief in the reality and existence of spirit beings who inhabit an invisible world about us; and thus it required but the suggestion subsequently to lead us to believe that these invisible beings might be disembodied spirits of our departed friends and neighbors. And this would not seem altogether new or unnatural, since we commonly dream of seeing persons who have long since died, and we frequently hold



converse with our departed friends in our dream experiences — and thus it seems very likely that the basic psychology of spiritualism had its early suggestion and remote origin in the phantasies of the dream life of the race, which were carried over from time to time into a state of consciousness and vividly recalled to memory at the termination of the slumber period.

Still further, as we study the subject of dreams, we learn that as far back as historic records are accessible, there early came into existence a cult or priesthood who specialized in the interpretation of dreams. The dream book is as old as the hills. Every symbolism, every fancy and imagination of the dream life was supposed to have a literal significance, and constituted an effort on the part of the invisible world to communicate warnings, advice and information to the living. It is not always clear just what was the exact philosophy or theology of this belief in dreams. That is, as to whether dreams were controlled by supernatural forces, good demons, angels, or what not — who all the while were trying to make themselves manifest to us during the night season; or whether, as was the belief in more recent times, it was the spirits of the dead and departed who were trying to come back, and through the symbolism of the slumber season, were trying to communicate superior wisdom or impart dire warnings to their loved ones.

Whatever the philosophy of the thing may be, in



the last analysis, the net result of this ancient and even modern tendency to attach undue significance to our dreams has been to further the cause of spiritualism — to strengthen our belief in the probability of the existence of spirits, unseen personalities surrounding us and hovering about us as we journey through this vale of tears.

## 2. FUNERAL SERMONS

Not only is the young and growing mind destined to be plagued with the problem of deciphering its dreams, and troubled with the probable interpretation thereof; but for our second year of high school training, preliminary to the college course in spiritualism, we can appropriately consider the suggestive influence and psychologic impression made upon the mind of an adolescent youth who, in the course of human events, is sooner or later called upon to attend an orthodox funeral service, and listen to the conventional funeral sermon. Now, I am not making flippant criticism of things religious or spiritual. But I feel it incumbent upon me sincerely and critically to analyze every factor in the preliminary psychologic preparation of the minds of men which tends to ripen and prepare them for the deception of spiritism, and therefore, honesty requires that we deal with these things frankly and fearlessly, but kindly withal.

I well remember the first funeral sermon I ever

heard — my readers will probably recall a similar experience. What more impressive occasion, when in the presence of our beloved dead, as we listen to the exhortations and admonitions of the shepherd of the faithful flock who endeavors, in his well-meant efforts, to utilize the occasion of sorrow and bereavement and the presence of the dead, to impress upon those present their solemn obligations to righteous conduct and higher living. The clergyman's motive is above reproach. He is certainly blameless, as regards any conscious guilt that may attach to him for the part he unwittingly plays in furthering spiritualistic tendencies, and administering to those human beliefs which constitute the background and stage in front of which and upon which spiritualism practices and prospers.

The sermon was given by a very devout and sincere clergyman; but I can vividly recall the refrigerant shivers that went up and down my spine during the sermon. Solemn as it was, impressive as it was intended to be, I could almost feel the spirits of the departed relatives hovering over me. I was fearful to look up or to either side, lest my eye should meet an apparition from the spirit world.

Nevertheless, the net result of these popular funeral sermons is to impress upon the young mind very vividly and directly, and under emotional conditions destined to make such impressions indelible and lifelong — I say, the young mind at such times and on

such occasions is solemnly taught that our departed friends are not in reality dead; but that they have passed on to a greater sphere; that they have but entered upon an enlarged existence; that even while we mourn their loss they are able to look down in supreme happiness from their heavenly place in the spirit world, and we are told that, as they behold us, they long to comfort our sorrow, and console us in our grief.

### 3. TELEPATHY

By the time we reach the junior year of high school in mysticism and spiritism, we are ready to begin our excursions into the higher spheres of cultism, and among the first of these advanced studies we are usually introduced to telepathy. From early youth, we have heard about "mind reading," and the vast majority of adults have seen presentations, on the stage, of numerous stunts which purported to be exhibitions of mind reading. A person, usually a woman, it will be recalled, sits blindfolded on the stage, while an assistant goes through the audience examining coins, touching objects, and otherwise designating those things which the blindfolded mind reader more or less accurately describes, and the general impression is given to the audience that she is reading their minds, or at least the mind of her working partner. There prevails at the present time a general belief on the part of the common people, that certain individuals are "mind readers."



It is but a step from this commonplace belief in the existence of "mind readers" to the more refined philosophy of telepathy. Telepathy is the alleged psychic ability to send and to receive messages, independent of the ordinary organs of sense. Now, it is plain that if one human being, a human entity, can send through the ether a mental message to another materialistic human being, by means of telepathy — then even material beings possess an immaterial, or at least a supersensory mode of communication with each other.

Once granting this, how easy it would be to take the next step, and conceive that the material mind might be utilized merely as a feasible receiving or sending aerial over which the spooks and spirits of the invisible world could initiate and register vibrations which could be picked up by those in tune — *en rapport* — and who would thus be in a position to transcribe these messages of the other world to the open-mouthed spiritual plebeians of the material world, much as the wireless or radio operator would receive the ticks and dashes of the Morse code by a wireless wave and then translate them to the "common herd."

And the wireless telegraph and telephone, the present day popular radio craze, serve the purpose in many minds of confirming their belief in the fantastic and the mysterious. For they reason that here is a common communication passing right through space from sender to receiver, but they overlook the fact that in



wireless and in radio we are dealing with more or less well known physical laws, and that they work irrespective of person and other human influences, being regulated by known laws and favored or hindered by known physical and material conditions.

#### 4. THE OUIJA BOARD

As the last grade of the high school of spiritism, we may consider the ouija board, that queer little three-legged contrivance, and its table base, that is regarded by some earnest souls as being the mouthpiece of Satan, and by others as being the channel of Divine wisdom for God's erring creatures on earth.

We have witnessed a veritable ouija board craze in the United States in recent years. Drug store windows and notion store counters have exhibited these supposed mediums of communication between this world and the next in endless profusion. As a result of all the philosophic and psychologic preparation and preliminary religious training which serve to foster superstition and favor deception, to which the growing minds of our boys and girls have been subjected, as we have heretofore noted, the time has now come when they are ripe to do a little experimental work on their own account, and a few pennies or some kind neighbor, for this purpose, will supply the ouija board. This contraption, whose name means "Yes, yes Board" appears to have got this name by a corruption of the words

which are the equivalent of yes in the French and German languages.

My attention was first directed to the influence of the ouija board several years ago, when I was called upon to attend a highly nervous, much wrought up patient, an excitable woman who had recently lost a daughter, her only child, and who had been experimenting somewhat with spirit mediums, but more with the ouija board, and who, as the result of her experiments on the frontiers of spiritland, had become unbalanced — had, plainly speaking, gone crazy. And I have come in contact with no small number of cases since that day in which the ouija board and its associated ideas have contributed much to the overthrow of reason in the mind of some soul predisposed to these things by hereditary nervous and mental instability.

Of course, I well understand that many people take up the ouija board as a diversion, as a means of parlor amusement. They outwardly proclaim their disbelief in the whole spiritualistic proposition, but at the same time they overlook the fact that they have, from the earliest dawn of reason, been unwittingly prepared by their elders, up through a graduated and progressive course of psychic training, which predisposes them, in certain conditions and under favorable circumstances, to be unduly affected by these mystic and spiritistic influences. And so, while they start out upon their ouija experiments innocently enough, and without the

least conscious thought of seriously regarding the messages which may by chance come to them from the manipulation of this harmless-appearing little tripod; nevertheless, credulity, fear and superstition operate with such unerring certainty and with such inherent power, and since they have been so thoroughly prepared by a hundred and one influences, extending from the ghost story of their childhood days down to the philosophic content of a recent touching and solemn funeral sermon, they not infrequently succumb to the psychic treachery of this specious deception.

So we are prepared, in becoming expert and enthusiastic ouija disciples, to graduate from our high school preparation for spiritualism, and can be considered now full-fledged candidates, with proper qualifications, to take up the more advanced studies and adventures which we shall next consider as the college course of spiritism.

#### D. A COLLEGE EDUCATION IN SPIRITISM

We have reviewed the experiences of the average civilized youth from childhood up through the kindergarten of spiritism, the common school of superstition and credulity, into the years of the adolescent high school experiences in things occult, mysterious, and supposedly supernatural; and we are now ready to take up the study of what might be called a college course in the occult. I believe you will agree with me



that the pre-college training has been thorough-going and adequate, and that by the time the average individual has reached the age of young manhood or young womanhood, they are quite thoroughly grounded in those essentials which are requisite for the making of a good candidate for a college course in spiritism.

### 1. HYPNOTISM

While, to the psychologist, hypnotism is a science more or less well understood, and one which is, largely at least, based upon the known laws of psychology and physiology; nevertheless, to the man in the street, hypnotism has always stood for the mysterious, and represents a performance that, in the opinion of the average citizen, borders on the supernatural. If you are able to hypnotize your fellows, they are going to look upon you with more or less awe, and feel that you are in possession of powers entirely beyond the range of the average human being.

While it is true that much of the commercial hypnotism exhibited in public stage performances is entirely fraudulent, and the amusing antics of the subject but represent the doings of a confederate for pay, at the same time, there are to be observed a sufficient number of real demonstrations of hypnosis now and then to keep the subject alive in the popular mind, and to contribute directly to the further confirmation of the belief of mankind in the existence of extraordinary



human beings who are possessed of unusual powers and who are able to utilize their psychic gifts in such a manner as to exert this peculiar influence over their fellows. While I distinctly regard the hankering for hypnotism and the undue interest in all of these pseudo-psychic sciences as an indication of that state of the public mind which is bent upon seeking those things which are spectacular and supposedly supernatural, at the same time I recognize that hypnotism is unduly feared in many circles, and I believe that it has little or no value in the treatment of ordinary nervous diseases.

## 2. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THEOSOPHY

Many well-meaning and earnest Christian Scientists will no doubt resent my opinion that the practices and dogmas of the cult tend indirectly to gather recruits for the cause of spiritualism. We do not necessarily mean by this that many who have embraced Christian Science will in turn become spiritualists. That is not always the way in which the influences which make for spiritism work. As we have already seen, there are so many present-day tendencies which unconsciously prepare the minds of average individuals to be favorably inclined toward spiritism, while at the same time such an object was very far from the intents and purposes of those responsible for these various agencies and activities which constitute the conventional and ortho-

dox training of spiritualistic candidates. It is not that so many Christian Scientists are destined to become spiritualists, but rather it is the spiritistic tendency of the whole Christian Science system which exerts that influence upon its immediate communicants and the public in general, that leads them to expect so much from exclusive spirit agencies.

The Christian Scientists are wont to deny the reality of matter, the reality of disease, etc., and they place over-emphasis upon the spirit. It is quite in keeping with the inherent tendency of the race to explain even the material manifestations of nature by ancient spiritistic theories.

The very fact that, let us say, a million people are willing to believe that all is spirit and nothing is matter — and I presume there are many more who lean toward this sort of philosophy — this very fact serves to impress the subconscious public mind with the notion that, after all, the important thing in life is spirit and spirit connections; that human suffering is a figment of mortal mind; and that evil and sorrow are but vain imaginations. Now there is a psychologic reflex from all this propaganda, on the public mind, which exerts a pernicious influence upon tens of thousands of individuals who never become formal communicants of the Christian Science cult. They frequently make a joking remark about something that has happened in the neighborhood, saying, "Well, there must be something

in Christian Science, after all," and though they never join the Christian Science church they are directly or indirectly influenced in the belief that the spirit world is able to manipulate the material world; that health and disease of the body are regulated by the mental state and controlled by spiritual forces; and the net result of all this psychic drift and mystic tendency is greatly to augment the inherent superstition and credulity of mankind. In other words, Christian Science and Spiritualism both thrive on the same sort of human curiosity, that same sort of willingness to accept as true a host of theological fallacies and unproven pretensions.

As if Christian Science were not enough to have precipitated upon the present age in the nefarious scheme of preliminary spiritistic preparation, we must needs have a revival, in our day and generation, of theosophy and other Hindu mysticism with all their numerous phantasms, ranging from the idealism of Berkleyism to the transmigration of the soul. And these occult and mystic propagandas are cited in this connection only to complete the list — to finish the story of the spiritistic tendencies of modern times — to recite how things old and new are being utilized in the culminating influences of the twentieth century designed to enthrall the minds of men with ancient superstition, and enslave the modern intellect with the dogmas and delusions of witchcraft and necromancy.



## 3. MIRACLE SEEKING — DIVINE HEALING

There exists today the same willingness on the part of the people to be misled and deceived as was found in the minds and hearts of our forefathers, and the power of these modern humbugs of healing is found to consist in their ability apparently to cure disease. Having relieved physical pain and seemingly cured bodily disease, the teachers of these systems force their religious and ethical views upon their converts as the price of retaining healing and regaining health.

This is certainly the day and generation of miracle seekers, as well as thrill chasers. The thoughtless and frivolous bend every energy and pursuit to diversion and amusement. The solemn and serious go in quest of the spectacular and unusual in theologic lines and in occult circles. In the end we are all looking for the same thing. We want to be startled and thrilled, not to mention amused and entertained. It is the same old inherent human curiosity, the spirit of adventure, the motive of the explorer. We have just about explored the entire face of this planet, well-nigh mastered the physical laws of earth, sea, and sky, and now man's inquisitive nature must turn itself toward the realms of the invisible and the worlds of the supernatural.

## 4. THE PSYCHIC RESEARCH SOCIETIES

It seems that modern civilization is passing through a psychic age. The psychologists have unwittingly



given a tremendous boost to the cause of occultism by the advances which they have caused to be made in the psychologic sciences. Society is beset on all sides with books, magazine articles, and other forms of literature, not to mention popular lectures, special classes, etc., dealing with psychic themes, applied psychology, mental efficiency, new thought, mental science, and so on, ad infinitum.

The psychologist has been occupying the center of the scientific stage for some time, though he is being seriously crowded at the present time by the biochemists with all their recent lore respecting the endocrines of the ductless gland system. Nevertheless, the psychologist has exerted a master influence over the minds of the public for the past two decades, and no doubt this psychic tendency of modern science has, both directly and indirectly had much to do with helping to focus the attention of the public mind upon the more mystic and occult phases of psychic phenomena.

If the human mind can have such a tremendous influence over health and disease, over happiness and prosperity, the unthinking individual reasons, perhaps the spirits may have a still more powerful influence. A study of true psychology would be the surest preventative, the quickest cure, for spiritualistic tendency, but the study of a good deal of this half-baked pseudo-psychology only tends to foster superstition and increase

confidence in the mystic and mysterious. Quack psychologists are in league with the mediums of spiritualism in that they unconsciously lead their students and followers away from a recognition of natural law as the explanation of the phenomena of life, and lead them unduly to lean toward, and depend upon, invisible psychic and fictitious spiritistic explanations to account for commonplace experiences, and ordinary, everyday phenomena.

Too bad that we cannot have more real psychology taught the common people; that we cannot have more of it in the schools. Unfortunate, indeed, that we do not better teach our boys and girls and our college students those principles of psychologic and physical law that would make them largely immune to the sophistries of spiritism. But perhaps it is too much to expect that even such a thorough-going scientific training could prevent certain psychic souls from being attracted by the occult, since so many men of science, men at least who had a reputation for scientific accuracy, have been led to commit themselves, mind, soul, and body, to the cause of spiritism.

And now, if the students of the occult and the "spook seekers" have not been able fully to satisfy their longing for adventure in the psychic realms of mysticism; if perchance they have to some small degree a scientific bent of mind, then they can with more dignity and some feeling of consistency turn

themselves to the more pretentious modes of investigation carried on by the various societies for psychic research. At least these organizations go through the form of investigating spiritistic phenomena, and they have contributed a great deal, among the more intelligent circles, the better educated classes, to stimulate an interest in psychic affairs and directly promote the cause of spiritism.

While these societies for psychic research have done much to eliminate the more palpable frauds, they have at the same time, performed a valuable service to the spiritists, in that they have served the purpose enormously to advertise the more pretentious and high class mediums. As one encyclopedia says, "Its work has tended to put limits to the claims which have been made for communication with the discarnate, though it has at the same time tended to strengthen the belief by giving it better scientific credentials than it has heretofore possessed." In other words, the society for psychic research has sought to prove itself a sort of Dun and Bradstreet for the whole spiritistic movement, giving the laymen, as it were, a sort of psychic rating on the various classes of mediums and pseudo-mediums.

And so, as we wind up our study in this, what we have for the sake of comparison denominated the senior year in our college course in spiritism, we see that we have had a progressive training in mysticism, credulity and superstition, from the early years and

ghost story frights of childhood, up through the quest of the mysterious and the seeking of the supernatural by means of fortune tellers, clairvoyants and the ouija board, to our actual contact with trance mediums, tongues, and the apparent demonstration of the ability to heal disease in answer to prayer and the touch of those who are supposed to be representatives of divine forces.

And now what is the net result of all this? Simply to lead the minds of men away from natural law and the true explanation of the life phenomena of this planet. To lead honest minds away from a settled and established belief in the orderly procedure of affairs in our world and from the fact that, commonly speaking, matters of health and disease, happiness and prosperity are dominated and controlled by a reign of natural law. The net result of all our repeated excursions into the occult, and our tampering with the mystic, is to make of us potential spiritualists — to educate men and women to look to and depend upon, the unseen for information, comfort, and consolation; and to seek to obtain by unearned and short-cut extra-human methods, wisdom, information and skill.



## CHAPTER III

### THE MODERN SPIRITUALISTIC MOVEMENT

**M**Y RESEARCHES have led me to believe that the modern cult of spiritualism, as we understand it and recognize it today, really had its origin with the teaching and doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Swedenborg was a physiologist of more or less note, who lived in Stockholm. His first published works dealing with philosophy and theology appeared in 1734, and it was about at this time that he began his extensive researches in physiology and anatomy for the purpose of locating the human soul, and he published numerous works dealing with his researches along this line. He claims to have had Divine revelations in which were revealed to him the philosophy of the spiritual world, and he published numerous works containing these alleged revelations.

#### 1. THE FOX SISTERS

While it is probably true that Swedenborg was the father of modern spiritualism, American spiritualism, as a spectacular phenomenon, seems to have had its origin in Hydeville, near Rochester, New York, in 1848. Near this little village there lived a farmer by the name

of John D. Fox. He had a family of six children, two of whom (daughters) were living at home. It seems that the Fox family, who had but recently moved into this home, were early disturbed by peculiar nocturnal noises. These strange sounds were attributed to rats and mice, loose boards, and what not, but ere long it appeared that these noises were more or less systematized, and so it is recorded that on the night of March 1, 1848, when the parents and the two daughters had gone to bed in the same room, these noises, or as they were later called, "rappings," became unusually violent. It would seem that Mrs. Fox became inordinately interested in these phenomena, and she embarked upon a program of further acquaintance and experimentation with this strange force or intelligence which had so unceremoniously invaded her quiet and unpretentious home. According to report, it seems that Mrs. Fox succeeded in eliciting the information that these rapping forces purported to be the spirit of a dead man by the name of Charles B. Rosma, and as time went on the spirit communicated to Mrs. Fox the information that this man Rosma had been murdered several years before in the house in which these manifestations were taking place.

By this time the other members of the Fox family had resumed interest in these manifestations, and for miles around the news of the "rapping spirits" and the Fox sisters had spread, and as time went by many mes-

sages were received from what purported to be this dead man Rosma's spirit returned to the scene of his murder. It is claimed that many of these messages were verified, and Margaret Fox began to develop very extraordinary occult ability as time went on, and many remarkable seances were held by her with the rapping spirits. Scores of people who attended these seances were led to believe that the Fox girls were really in communication with the spirits of dead and departed souls. These raps were always clearly associated with the two daughters, Margaret (aged fifteen) and Kate or Cathie (aged twelve). A third, a married elder sister, named Leah — at that time Mrs. Fish, and later Mrs. Underhill — came to Hydeville, and, on her return to Rochester, took Margaret with her. Leah herself was presently a "medium." The excitement in the neighborhood was intense. Throughout the whole country mediums sprang up on every side, and the Foxes were in such demand that they could soon charge a dollar a sitter. The "spirits," having at last discovered a way of communicating with the living, rapped out all sorts of messages to the sitters.

## 2. SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA

As near as I can ascertain, the concrete, organized, spiritualistic movement in the United States had its origin and spread from this New York episode. Spiritualism, it should be known, is similar to socialism, in



that there are many ramifications and branches of the cult, while there are tens of thousands who believe in its essential tenets who are not formal communicants of the organized movement. Later on, the phenomena of spiritualism were so enlarged as to include such stunts as table tipping, slate writing, and subsequently to the actual materialization of alleged spirit entities.

So the real pioneer of American commercial mediums was Leah, (Mrs. Underhill), the eldest of the three Fox sisters who virtually founded American Spiritualism. She was an expert in fraud and a woman of business. Until her own sisters gave her away, forty years after the beginning of the movement, she was never exposed; and even an exposure by her sister in the public press and on the public stage in New York made no difference in her career. She was the Mme. Blavatsky, the Mrs. Eddy, of Spiritualism. In 1869 she first produced "Ghosts" at her sittings. Her sister Katie (so Katie later confirmed) impersonated the dead wife of a New York banker.

*Confession of the Fox Sisters.* Margaret Fox married Captain Kane, the Arctic explorer, who often urged her to expose the fraud, as he believed it to be. In 1888 she found courage to do so. (*New York Herald*, September 24, 1888.) She and Katie, she said, had discovered a power of making raps with their toe-joints, and had hoaxed Hydeville. Their enterprising elder sister had learned their secret, and had organized



the very profitable business of spirit-rapping. The raps and other phenomena of the Spiritualist movement were, Mrs. Kane said, fraud from beginning to end. She gave public demonstrations in New York of the way it was done; and in October of the same year her younger sister Cathie confirmed the statement, and said that Spiritualism was "all humbuggery, every bit of it" (*Herald*, October 10 and 11, 1888). They agreed that their sister Leah, (Mrs. Underhill), the founder of the Spiritualist movement and the most prosperous medium of its palmiest days, was a monumental liar and a shameless organizer of every variety of fraud. That a wealthy Spiritualist afterwards induced Cathie to go back on this confession need not surprise us.

### 3. SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

Spiritualism, in its earlier history in England, was given a great impetus by one Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who took it upon himself, in connection with the Psychical Research Society, to collect together evidences of moving objects, noises, lights, etc., in connection with spirit seances. It was he that reported the famous Armstrong case where the tables pranced about and on one occasion came down with such destructive force that the legs were broken. He also gave publicity to extraordinary bell-ringing, and other stunts which were supposed to be of spirit origin.

It should be stated that, as far back as 1874, Sir William Crookes became attracted to spiritualism and read papers and made many addresses concerning his experiences with alleged mediums. His interest in the movement considerably anti-dated that of Sir Oliver Lodge.

#### 4. HOME — THE PATRON SAINT OF SPIRITUALISM

D. D. Home seems to have been the central character around which spiritualism in Great Britain had its origin some fifty or sixty years ago, and Sir A. Conan Doyle elevated him to the pedestal of the Patron Saint of Modern Spiritualism.

Home was born near Edinburgh in 1833, of a Scottish family that is reputed to have had a traditional "second sight" as a part of its heredity. Home's mother is supposed to have been a sort of clairvoyant, or to have been otherwise endowed with second sight. He was a delicate child, of highly nervous temperament. He was raised by an aunt, who, when he was nine years of age, immigrated to America.

Home's spiritualistic experience seems to have had its origin in 1845, when he and a young companion were out in the woods reciting a ghost story, and they agreed between themselves that whichever one should die first he would subsequently reappear to the surviving member of the duet. They were soon separated by Edwin's parents moving away, and Home, a few months after-

wards, is reported to have had a vision one evening, shortly after retiring, after which he said to the family: "I have seen Edwin. He died three days ago." And two or three days afterward word was received announcing the death of his companion.

From now on ensue a succession of marvelous events, demonstrations, etc., much to the displeasure of his aunt, who was a member of the Church of Scotland, and who opposed her nephew's Wesleyan connections so much that he finally joined the Congregationalists as a compromise. These events, it should be borne in mind, are occurring about two years after the famous knockings of the Fox sisters at Rochester had attracted so much attention.

It would seem that Home, after all, created much more of a stir in England than he had in America. There were no Fox sisters there to share attention with him. He was the whole show in Great Britain. The best of society took an interest in Home's manifestations; earls, lords, and what not became his patrons, and while Home does not seem to have sought to commercialize the immediate seance, it is evident that he received liberal support from numerous sources. It would require a book twice the size of this little volume to reproduce all the letters from prominent people who were willing to swear to the remarkable things they saw at the seances conducted by Home from time to time. In the years that followed, Home visited Italy,

France, and Russia, where he conducted many seances, and became a fast friend of Alexis Tolstoi.

From 1859 to 1861 he seems to have been back and forth between the continent and England, holding seances for the highest society and royalty, and it was about this time that the scientist, Faraday, contemplated an investigation, but it seems that his conditions were not altogether acceptable to the medium and so the test never came off. By 1860 a number of influential converts to spiritualism had been made in England.

In London Home met Mrs. Lyon, who subsequently took a fancy to him, adopted him — he changing his name to Home-Lyon — and settled upon him twenty-five or thirty thousand pounds at first, and subsequently another thirty thousand pounds, all of which ended in a lawsuit which detracted much from Home's popularity, as Mrs. Lyon claimed that the money was extracted from her under spiritualistic influence. She claimed that her deceased husband's spirit, speaking through Home as a medium, directed that she give this money to Home. The courts decided against Home, and ordered the money returned to Mrs. Lyon.

It seems that in the later years of Home's life he received the majority of his communications in a state of trance. Home died of his lung trouble and other affections on June 2, 1886.

The careful study of Home's life and the perusal of



his writings suggests that there is indeed a great paucity of "leading lights" in the modern spiritistic movement — or else the present day sponsors for this new religion would hardly settle upon such a character as Home for its Patron Saint. His whole career was "fishy" from first to last; though notwithstanding the unsavory lawsuit and the adverse judgment of the British courts, directing him to return the fortune he had secured from Mrs. Lyon under the guise of spirit messages from her dead husband — notwithstanding the utter preposterousness of the impossible claims and assertions of Home — his fanatical followers believed in him to the end, and today they would commemorate him, in the words of Doyle, as "the basis of the true modern spiritualism."

#### 5. REV. STANTON MOSES

About the time that Home was in vogue in England, the Rev. Stainton Moses was occupying the center of the stage in America. Reverend Moses seems, like Home, to have made little attempt to commercialize his seances, but he was one of the earlier and more pretentious advocates of spiritualism in America. The seances of Reverend Moses are said to have been particularly characterized by whispering voices in the magic circle, as well as by numerous lights which appeared from time to time. The voices are reported to have sometimes, blended into a quartet or a choir which

could be heard in gentle meter as if the music were being wafted to the hearers from a considerable distance. Of course, these manifestations always took place in a perfectly dark room. The majority of the seances of the Reverend Moses were conducted for his friend, Doctor Spear.

Like Home, the friends of Moses claim that he was frequently lifted off the ground, or that he told them of experiences in which he had been levitated. So-called "rappings" were often associated with this medium, but his chief spirit pursuit seemed to pertain to automatic writing. From his hand, by automatic writing, there would ensue a flood of elevating and interesting, but always more or less inaccurate, material. As previously noted, lights were frequently seen floating about the room, and on one occasion the medium was so unfortunate as to drop and break a bottle of phosphorus whose fumes soon penetrated the whole atmosphere of the darkened seance room.

#### 6. LATER SPIRITUALISTIC LIGHTS

During the half century that spiritualism has been masquerading in this country and Great Britain, a vast number of leading lights have come and gone. Among this number may be mentioned:

*The Case of Mrs. Fay.* A few years back the world was entranced by the astonishing seances of Mme. Fay. In her performances, she was always accompanied by

her husband, the Colonel, and she practiced and prospered until one time an accident occurred in one of her performances which was attended by Mr. Podmore, and he made the discovery of just how she liberated herself. She had perfected a method of fastening the tapes that bound her hands together, so that she could liberate herself at will and carry on the numerous stunts, all of which, of course, were done in a perfectly dark room. A London Museum proprietor also subsequently exposed Mrs. Fay, and her income as a medium was so reduced that she offered, by letter, to go on his stage, for a fee, and show how all of her tricks and those of other mediums were done. This sort of thing becomes a real tragedy when we come to think that by this time she had been the means of converting hundreds, if not thousands, to the cause of spiritualism and influencing them to become devout believers in the supernatural.

*The Interesting Mrs. Piper.* Mrs. Piper is probably one of the most interesting specimens of mediumship that ever attracted attention in America, or who was ever investigated by anything like what could purport to be a scientific commission. Mrs. Piper was even able to take in the shrewd and critical Mr. Podmore; although Podmore would not accept the hypothesis of "spooks" or "spirits," he was disposed to grant the genuineness of some of her performances and to explain them on the hypothesis of telepathy. He resorted



to the theory that it was Mrs. Piper's subconscious self that thinks and creates these spiritual beings, and that she elicits communications from her sitters by making telepathic contact with their respective minds.

Now when we are discussing Mrs. Piper, the reader should bear in mind that we are considering a woman who was regarded as the "greatest clairvoyant in the history of the movement" and that she was endorsed by Doctor Hodgson and his American Society for Psychic Research; and that she was further endorsed by Sir Oliver Lodge and the leading British lights in the firmament of spiritism. But Mrs. Piper always fell down when it came to the actual test — when it came to "brass tacks," in the language of slang. Her spook, Phinuit, who could communicate so much through Mrs. Piper to the investigators, on subjects of a general nature, could not give a sane or connected account of his own life on earth, or give a plausible reason why he should forget the medical facts and knowledge which he had possessed when in the flesh.

When Myers, the renowned English investigator and writer on spiritism, died in 1901, and left a sealed envelope containing a test message, Mrs. Piper could not get through to the investigators a single word of this message. When her long time sponsor, Hodgson, died in 1905 he left behind a large amount of manuscript in cipher, but Mrs. Piper was unable to catch the least clew to his writings and this experiment added but



another to the long list of dismal failures to make good under real test conditions. Even when she claimed to have called up Professor Hodgson from the grave, when his friends put test questions to her, or to what purported to be his spirit speaking through Mrs. Piper as a medium, about his early life in Australia, her answers were all consistently wrong.

She was completely baffled when a message was given to her in Latin, though she was supposed to be speaking in the name of the spirit of the learned Myers, and it took her three months to get the meaning (out of a dictionary?) of one or two easy words of it. She gave a man a long account of an uncle whom he never had; and it turned out that this information was in the Encyclopedia, and related to another man of the same name. In no instance did she ever give details that it was impossible for her to learn in a normal way, and it is for her admirers to prove that she did not learn them in a normal way, and, on the other hand, to give a more plausible explanation of what Doctor Maxwell, their great authority, calls her "inaccuracies and falsehoods."

*The Famous Bangs Sisters.* Among the most interesting of the physical-manifestation mediums of the recent past were the Bangs Sisters of Chicago, whom I have seen operate very many times. They were the same Misses Bangs who painted spirit pictures right before the eyes of their sitters. And many of their

methods, it must be confessed, were very difficult to detect and expose.

These interesting maiden ladies continued their work of deceiving the public — and they were very clever at it — until they were finally rounded up by the Chicago police and their profitable business was brought to an end.

Sooner or later, it seems, the most brilliant mediums are detected; and this same thing occurred in the case of the famous Mrs. Wriedt, the British medium who flourished in England, but who was caught in Norway.

And so the Rev. Frederick Wiggin was able to put many things over, but when he got up against the shrewd Doctor Funk, the wires got crossed and he got Doctor Funk's mother's death mixed up and attributed it to his wife.

*The Classic Palladino.* Not many years ago, they brought to America the classic medium of continental Europe, Eusapia Palladino. She was not the common garden variety of medium, but the real thing. You all know how she came, heralded, to this country; how this Italian working girl, with no education, the daughter of a shopkeeper in Naples, held the attention of scientists and investigators, and how she earned fortunes through her profession. And you will recall how the late Professor Hugo Munsterberg and his assistants trapped her in this country. In the midst of her wonderful performance, she uttered an outlandish scream.

The seance was suddenly terminated. One of Professor Munsterberg's assistants had crawled along on the floor, and in the midst of the performance had seized the medium's leg. She was carrying on her wonderful performance by means of the dexterous use of her toes, handling instruments, and causing the rest of the phenomena associated with her seance.

It should be borne in mind that the investigators and observers of Eusapia were not allowed to put a foot on her right foot because of the fact that she claimed that that foot was "afflicted with a painful corn." At the same time we should remember that one of her hands must not be clasped by the investigator because of the further fact that she "was acutely sensitive to pain in that hand." Under no circumstances would this famous medium ever allow a man to stand near her with nothing to do but intently observe her performances. It would seem that she was able to release her hands and feet from almost any ordinary control by means of her constant wriggling and squirming.

One of the early frauds Eusapia was detected in was effected by means of an investigator who sneaked in a camera and took an exposure of the levitation of a stool high in the air. When the photograph was developed it was plain to be seen that the stool was resting on the medium's head. From that time on she developed a peculiar phobia for photographers or anyone carrying anything that in the least resembled a camera



of any size.

*Slade, The Slate-Writer.* Truesdell undertook a serious investigation of Slade. Having paid the customary five dollars, he received a number of interesting and pretty messages purporting to be of spirit origin, but wholly unsatisfactory and unconvincing to the investigator. He soon discovered that the supposed spirit touches on his arm were executed by Slade's foot. He concluded that they were performed in order to divert his attention away from being too closely concentrated on the slate-trick.

The main theme of the messages which most sitters received on Slade's trick-slates was in the nature of an exhortation to persevere in the investigation of things spiritual, and of course this meant — although not directly implied — that the investigator would pay the medium, Slade, five dollars a sitting. How else could these investigations be suitably or successfully carried on?

Truesdell tells of a subsequent visit to Slade at which time he left a misleading letter in his overcoat pocket out in Slade's hall, and subsequently found that the all-wise spirits assumed that he was "Samuel Johnson, Rome, New York." But before the medium had entered the seance room, and while he was presumably out in the hall, going through the investigator's overcoat pockets, Truesdell rapidly overhauled Slade's room. He found a slate containing a carefully



prepared and pious message, purporting to come from the spirits, already written and signed, as was Slade's custom, with the name of his dead wife, Alcinda. Directly underneath this message on the slate Truesdell wrote: "Henry, look out for this fellow — he is up to snuff! Alcinda." Then he carefully replaced the slate, leaving everything exactly as he found it. Presently Slade came into the room and gave a most dramatic performance, during which he indulged in numerous contortions, and under the apparent influence of invisible spirits he gradually drew the small table on which his slates rested nearer and nearer the location of the hidden slate, whereupon he "accidentally" knocked the clean slate, which was about to be used for test purposes, off the table. This of course was nothing more nor less than a ruse to give him an excuse for picking up the prepared slate, which by this time was near at hand. The reader can easily imagine what Slade's emotions must have been when he read the words which Truesdell had written on the slate underneath his message but a few minutes previously. However, the medium soon overcame his embarrassment and after a little confusion he "laughingly acknowledged that he was a mere conjuror," and told the investigator who had outwitted him about many of the tricks of his profession. He was many times arrested and exposed in both this country and in England.

*The Seybert Commission Findings.* Henry Seybert

bequeathed funds to be used by the University of Pennsylvania in the scientific study of the phenomena of spiritualism. A committee, consisting of ten eminent men, made a thorough-going investigation of slate writing, trance mediums, and other mediumistic phenomena, and came to the conclusion that the whole sordid mess was fraudulent. They caught their mediums again and again in cheating, and by means of mirrors and other devices were able to detect the deceptive methods practiced by the mediums. And subsequent investigations have confirmed the findings of the Philadelphia investigation. The Seybert Commission in its report says: "An eminent professional juggler performed, in the presence of our commission, some independent slate writing far more remarkable than any we have witnessed with mediums."

And so no matter whether the investigation is conducted by University Professors or by the Scientific American—so far, at any rate, the mediums have all turned out to be cheats — they have all been detected in fraud.

## CHAPTER IV

### PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

**T**HE trail of modern spiritualism, since its inception at Hydeville three-quarters of a century ago, is strewn with the spectacle of the rise and downfall of a succession of "marvelous mediums." One by one these unique personalities have moved into the lime-light of public interest, only sooner or later to be caught cheating and to be in their turn detected in fraud. Again and again have the faithful believers been forced to view the downfall of their favorite medium — their chosen idol.

Of course, it is explained by the "pillars" of the spiritualistic faith that even good mediums, sometimes, in their effort to secure bread and butter — in their desire to cater to the insatiable desire of the public for "manifestations," succumb to the temptation to cheat, to practice fraud in some minor direction; but it is affirmed that over and above all this fraudulent element many of these mediums are real channels of communication between the living and the dead.

Since the early phenomena of rapping spirits — or the snapping toes of Margaret Fox — spiritistic phenomena embracing a series of seance "stunts" ranging

from roping, tying, and slate-writing, to materialization, have been successfully introduced by the earlier mediums, such as Home, Eddy Brothers, Mrs. Cobb, Foster, Henry Slade, and the Davenport Brothers.

#### 1. THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE SEANCE

If there are genuine mediums — that is, if one out of a hundred is as the wheat among the chaff, the gold in the midst of the dross — than it is indeed extremely unfortunate that the spirits of our departed friends find it inconvenient to return to our old world and communicate with us only under those conditions which lend themselves so favorably to fraud and deception. For instance, let us look at this matter for a moment from the standpoint of the cunning trickster and the wilful deceiver. Suppose we started out on a program deliberately to deceive the public into thinking we possessed the powers of spiritistic mediumship. First we must recognize the fact that the public possesses little real information of a scientific character concerning these phenomena, and that, therefore, everything would be favorable to the practice of fraudulent methods. To further enhance our ability to deceive, it would seem well for us to impose the following conditions:

a. *Absence of light — more or less complete darkness.* The less illumination we have upon the scene of our performances, the more secure against detection would



be our fraudulent practices.

b. *Diversion of attention.* To distract the attention we know to be one of the trump cards of both the parlor magician and the professional sleight-of-hand performer; and it has been our observation that the most phenomenal things occur in the seance chamber, as a rule, after the sitters are tired out by expectant listening and watching, or otherwise have had their powers of attention either partially exhausted or cleverly diverted.

c. *The element of surprise.* The psychology of the unexpected would be utilized by any performer who would seek to deceive and mystify the observer. The feats of the professional conjurer and of the spirit medium are often unexpected and unforeseen, and that is why it is quite impossible to take advance precautions against deception and trickery.

d. *Control of conditions.* The magician and the medium alike insist on controlling and manipulating the arrangement of all lights, furniture, and even the order of the sitters in the seance room. Now, it is a well-known fact that, from a scientific standpoint, the fundamental requisite for reliable experimentation is the complete control of conditions; therefore, in no sense can a real scientific experiment be conducted with spiritualistic mediums. Such tests are merely observations, and at that, under conditions and circumstances highly inimical to reliable and correct observation.

e. *Concealment.* The magician on the stage, in the performance of his more difficult tricks, always makes use of some sort of a table, a shelf, or a screen, but he seldom dares to employ such a complete mode of concealment as the medium utilizes in the conventional cabinet or curtain. The magician seldom resorts to the complete hiding of his person during an experiment.

f. *The power of suggestion.* Suggestion is one of the main methods employed by the magician, next to distracting the attention of his audience, looking toward a proper preparation of the minds of his observers for the finished performance of the trick. The conjurer palms the coin while he pretends to throw it into the air, the eye follows the motion of his hand, and suggestion is thereby utilized to aid in the deception.

g. *Tying, or holding hands.* This sort of trick has been so frequently exposed that we no longer marvel at seeing a man handcuffed and tied in a bag, or even thrown into a river, when he bobs up serenely with hands and feet, which were previously tied, loosened.

h. *Emotional expectancy, curiosity, and excitement.* The environment of an individual watching a magician in a theatre is that of an unbiased investigator—a detached observer; but the phenomena of a darkened seance room are all contrary to these requisites of scientific investigation. They all appeal to superstition and the emotions; the discussion of messages from dead friends and relatives, in fact the whole atmosphere of

spiritualism is such as to appeal to the emotions and awe of the supernatural rather than to reason and logic, to feed curiosity rather than to foster accurate judgment and correct observation.

We see, therefore, that if we should start out deliberately to arrange a program of deception, if we would purposely supply ourselves with all the tools, conditions, and environment favorable to fraud, we would do only what the mediums do under their alleged spirit dictation when they turn off the light and otherwise arrange the seance environment so that it constitutes the ideal conditions favorable to the perpetration of fraud.

## 2. MANUAL DEXTERITY—SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

Many of the outward manifestations accompanying the seances of the lower grade commercial mediums are nothing more nor less than sleight-of-hand tricks. Many of the more common spiritistic phenomena are the result of manual dexterity. If the magician is able to deceive the eye of his audience on a brilliantly lighted stage, how much more easy for the medium to practice this sort of deception in the dimly lighted rooms — and sometimes they even favor themselves by moments of complete darkness.

Several years ago I knew an individual who had ambitions to become a magician, but not being a prestidigitator of a high order he made little headway in his



chosen profession, and so he decided to become a "psychic." He sprang into prominence instantly, and within a few years had not only acquired a big reputation but had amassed an equally large fortune. He explained to me one time, in strictest confidence, that his tricks were so much more influential when they were enshrouded with the atmosphere of the supernatural, and when they had added to them the further interest which, he explained to me, "all people have in spooks and spirits."

It seems seldom to dawn upon the mind of the general public that spiritualistic performers might have taken the pains and precaution to have surrounded themselves with well-trained and reliable confederates. But investigation shows that they do this very thing. Many of the more successful of our modern fortune tellers, clairvoyants and mediums have maintained a large working organization, embracing numerous male and female confederates.

Not long ago I had for a patient a woman who had been for many years employed as hand-maiden to one of our well known mediums, and in delineating to me the story of her life, which was indeed very interesting, I not only learned the details of the manner in which she served and assisted her mediumistic employer, but learned also that there were no less than half a dozen such persons employed in connection with the more elaborate seances.



*Mechanical Apparatus.* I remember very well, twelve or fifteen years ago, when a certain patient came to consult me about his health, and when on inquiring about his business — whether his time was spent indoors or out of doors, etc., he replied by telling me that he was a manufacturer of apparatus for magicians and mediums. Now, I knew that magicians must carry a very large equipment, for it had been my privilege to know two or three of the leading magicians of the present time, and I had learned much of their methods and work, and I knew of the vast army of helpers they must have to arrange their performances and the enormous amount of paraphernalia and apparatus which they carried in order to produce their entertaining effects. But I confess it was a shock to me to know that the manufacture of apparatus for mediums was a business, and that it was carried on in connection with the manufacture of this same sort of appliances for use by professional magicians.

It will be observed that the high class mediums, who pull off the more marvelous stunts, must needs always perform amid their own surroundings. They cannot do these things out in the open. Everything must be carefully staged. The author well remembers the case of Madam X, who, in connection with a performance in which the table was dancing about rather lightly in obedience to the raising and lowering of her arms — when, to my mind, the most simple explanation would

be the employment of electro-magnetic force of some sort, since I noticed she was very careful to furnish her own table for this demonstration — I proposed to this medium that she allow my wife to take her into an adjoining room where she should undress and allow her clothing to be examined. This she refused to do. Next I proposed that I subject her table to an X-ray observation and this she also refused. She could not have her consecrated furniture subjected to such skeptical indignity. And so I could recite scores of cases in which the mediums refused to submit to real examination and scrutiny by mechanical and electrical experts.

The initiated among mediums and conjurers know where to go to buy the self-playing guitar which is such a helpful addition to a medium's tools of deception. Guitars are also made for mediums in which one of the panels can be removed, and one such instrument can become the hiding place for a vast amount of mediumistic paraphernalia. Guitars may in this way also have placed within them the mechanism of a small music box.

Still another medium kept a robe large enough to simulate a spirit's return in a hollow boot heel, while in the heel of the other shoe he kept an assortment of netting masks with which he could effect almost a dozen face transformations. One medium who had been repeatedly searched by investigating committees was finally caught. The peculiar luminous mask with

which he covered his face was at last discovered concealed within the body of a gold watch case which was minus its works.

### 3. INVISIBLE WRITING

One of the common methods employed, up to the present time, of getting spirit messages, and one which I have seen most cleverly perpetrated by a number of mediums, is to write the alleged spirit message on a piece of paper with any one of the many known invisible writing fluids, and then before the eyes of the sitter the medium will seal this apparently blank piece of paper in an envelope which the investigator can hold with his own hands, and then after the lapse of a certain length of time the envelope can be opened and the spirit message will be clearly visible.

Almost half a hundred different recipes for invisible writing fluid are in use by the mediums of this country, and we have been able to collect the formulae for almost this number, more than a dozen of which require only the application of a little heat to develop them; and with still others the inside of the envelopes can be so treated that the invisible writing will appear within a few minutes after the paper is inserted in these specially prepared containers.

Some time back a certain medium attracted considerable attention by putting a blank piece of paper in a large, wide-mouthed bottle, securely corking the bottle,



and allowing the investigator to hold it in his own hands, and within a few minutes the alleged spirit message would appear in a plainly visible and beautiful handwriting. This was a very impressive "stunt" until another medium in possession of the secret disclosed its technique, and now we can all produce the same spirit messages by writing on the paper with a weak solution of copper sulphate, in advance, then stopping it up securely in a bottle that has just been washed out with a solution of ammonia — enough of the gas of which is left in the bottle to develop the writing.

#### 4. ELECTRIC PHENOMENA

Magnets have been used very liberally by the more expert mediums in accomplishing their wonders. One medium operated on a glass table suspended by four ribbons. A cast of a hand was placed on this piece of glass. The hand was carefully and evenly balanced so that the least tilt would cause the fingers to tap upon the glass. Any question asked by a sitter would be promptly answered by the hand. You could thoroughly examine the hand at any time, and the experiment was conducted throughout in broad daylight. You could examine the suspended glass and the tapping hand while it was working; no threads or wires were present. Performances of this sort are conducted by means of an electro-magnet thrown into and out of



the field by an assistant in an adjoining room who hears the questions. The fingers of the hand model contained a core of soft iron, and the confederate who listened to the questions merely pressed a button to cause the hand to give the desired number of taps in answer to any and all questions.

I have been recently told of a conjurer who has produced a little table that will give spirit messages. You put your ear down to the top of the table and you hear it talk, yet you can examine the table at will. The table is in a room that is wired for "induction" effects, while within the top of the table is placed a telephone receiver. Around the receiver melted paraffine is poured, which gives the same note as the rest of the table which has a veneered top and gives no hollow sound at any spot. Several annunciators are placed in the wall carrying questions to a confederate in an adjoining room, who in turn transmits his answers to the top of the table in due time.

In the near future we shall no doubt be treated to phenomena that are due to real wireless telegraphy and telephony. There is no reason why mediums should not use these as they have the more simple and older technique of days gone by. One experimenter has already been reported as working on the construction of a "whispering gallery" in which the operator can stand and have voices emanate from a blank piece of cardboard which will serve the practical purpose of a

transmitter, or perhaps a piece of cardboard — apparently — which contains a thin metallic sheet between its layers.

*How one Medium became famous.* Perhaps you who are reading this may attend the seance of a medium as clever as the woman who became nationally famous as a result of her work one evening in a western city. While she was in the midst of her communication with the shades of those present, she stopped short. “I see a man murdered!” she exclaimed. Then she described a violent death scene, giving the name of the man and the address in the city where he was actually murdered a few minutes before she received the “spirit message.” The newspapers confirmed her statements, and later spread her fame throughout the country. From that time on people paid ridiculous prices for her services — until she was exposed.

The secret of her spiritualistic demonstration was simple. A radio antenna in the sole of her shoe received impulses from a transmitting antenna in the rug upon which she stood, and conveyed them to a sensitive head-phone hidden in a large bouquet of flowers on her shoulders. A reporter had telephoned the news of the murder to her confederate behind the scenes, who transmitted it by radio-telephone. The receiver concealed in the flowers was not loud enough for the audience to hear, but when the medium leaned her head upon the flowers she could hear it distinctly. Her feat was a

blow she had been aiming at skeptics for some time. She had placed her reporters at police stations, hospitals, and newspaper offices to wait for the news of a death by violence which would receive space in the papers.

*Fire Eaters.* Mediums are often observed (like Home) to show their supernatural powers by handling live coals of fire or otherwise playfully juggling highly heated objects — lamp chimneys, etc. Still other objects, such as handkerchiefs and neckties are passed through a flame without burning. Many formulae have been devised for temporarily fire-proofing one's hands or other objects so as to stand considerable heat and blaze without damage. One successful medium, long before the American public, gives the following formula for accomplishing this purpose: "Dissolve one-half ounce of camphor in two ounces of aquavita; add one ounce of quicksilver and one ounce of liquid styrax, which is the product of myrrh, and which prevents the camphor igniting. Shake and mix well together." Bathe the inside of the hand and the fingers in this preparation, allowing it to dry on, and you can duplicate the performance with the hot lamp chimney and hold your fingers in a blaze quite a while without any bad effect.

##### 5. TRICKS OF THE SEANCE ROOM

You must not forget that commercial mediums are



expert sleight-of-hand performers. They are able to have their hands tied behind their backs and, just like the magician, Keller, Thurston and others, would be able to show you their hands free if the lights were turned on; but in the darkness of the seance room they are able to produce the many wonders which are regarded by the sitters as spirit manifestations. They know where to buy all the paraphernalia needed to carry on their work. There are dealers right here in Chicago who sell this stuff. Not long ago, Mr. Hamilton, in a magazine article, gave extracts from a catalogue of forty pages which offered for sale all the secrets and paraphernalia that mediums use in perpetrating their frauds.

The mediums know how to be tied up in a sack and to liberate themselves so that in the darkness they can carry on their work; and yet when you turn on the light you will find them tied and sealed as before. There are all sorts of mechanical rappers, electrical thumping machines, etc., which can be had for the purpose of producing spirit raps. I have never been able to get these raps in an open room when even but a faint light was present. It always requires perfect darkness.

There are a score of different methods for tipping tables, the most common of which is to cause the table to lean forward slightly, the medium gets his toes under the near legs, and then balances it there; and in some

cases like this I have known spectators to go away and say that the table rose half way to the ceiling. Many other methods are used, such as the method of the black pin inserted in the top of the table and lifted by means of a notch in the medium's ring.

The manager, or the major-domo of the seance room, often supplies the medium with her tools, spirit robes, etc.

There are a half dozen different successful methods of holding hands, in which the medium can be released, and yet the sitters on either side think they are securely holding the medium's hand.

#### 6. INDEPENDENT VOICES—TRUMPETS

The so-called "independent voices" which appear in connection with many spiritualistic seances are a great puzzle to many people, but careful investigation usually discloses that they have been carried out into the room by means of extension speaking trumpets, speaking tubes, induction telephone technique, ventriloquism, etc. Many times the confederates and assistants in adjoining rooms are informed of what is transpiring in the seance room by means of the well-known dictograph system, whose openings are concealed behind furniture, underneath wall paper, etc. These systems are also used by the medium for producing whispers which are heard by the members of the circle in the darkened room.

"I don't know of any "stunt" in which mediums indulge themselves that I have so many times detected to be pure fraud as that of the speaking trumpet. Careful investigation always discloses that it is the medium or some confederate who is actually talking through the trumpet. They get their hands loose from the magic circle and they use the trumpet, which is built on the extension principle and can be shortened or lengthened, and by the direction in which it is pointed the voice can be made apparently to originate in almost any part of an average sized room. In other cases confederates are undoubtedly employed and are properly placed in the circle for assisting in this work.

I was informed a number of years ago, by an expert trumpet medium, that it required two or three years of practice to become proficient in the art — that is, to be able to manage a trumpet so that no voice would be heard at the mouth but only at the bell of the trumpet.

Trumpet speaking is rapidly going out of fashion because too many times the pocket electric flashlight has been turned on them so disastrously, and thus scores of these performers have come to their untimely end, for when the light is suddenly switched on or a flash is thrown on the scene, it is always found that the medium is at the end of the so-called "spirit-speaking trumpet."

#### 7. SEANCE LIGHTS

Many methods of producing light have been dis-



covered to be employed by so-called mediums. Sometimes these crafty creatures carry around a bottle of "cough medicine" which enables them to produce many striking phenomena, after the lights are turned out, in the shape of floating lights and other luminous manifestations.

Luminous phenomena "are easily simulated," says Doctor Maxwell. Most people will agree to this candid verdict of so experienced and so sympathetic an investigator. Tons of phosphorus have been used in the service of religion since 1848. It has taken the place of incense. The saintly Moses twice had a nasty mess with his bottle of phosphorus. Herne was one night tracing a pious message in luminous characters (with a damp match) when there was a crackle and flash; the match had "struck." The spiritualistic movement abounds in incidents which are in a double sense "luminous."

Certain sulphides may be used instead of phosphorus, and in modern times electricity is an excellent means of producing lights at a distance. Chemicals of the pyrotechnic sort are also useful. One must remember that behind the thousands of mediums, whose fertile brains are constantly elaborating new methods of evading control, are manufacturers and scientific experts who supply them with chemicals and apparatus. One often hears Spiritualists laugh at this suggestion as a wild theory of their opponents. But positive proof that

such is the case has been given over and over again.

Mediums have told me how they use French bridal veiling and Belgian netting treated with phosphorus and other compounds to manufacture all sorts of beautiful spirit robes. I once saw taken in a raid in a seance in Chicago some thirty yards of this material which could be almost secreted in the palm of the hand, and could easily be contained in an ordinary pocket. In fact I was able to put it all, very conveniently in a pint cup. There are many different ways of preparing this material so as to make it properly luminous and "spooky" in appearance during the darkened hours of the seance. One experienced medium furnished us with a recipe for treating this fabric in order successfully to convert it into "spirit robes."

Most mediums who attempt materializations have been found, upon investigation, to employ either confederates or some form of luminous costume. When the medium works alone, he generally uses the luminous costumes; but when he has confederates who impersonate the spirits, this is unnecessary. If the medium works from a cabinet, he first allows strangers to erect and at the same time thoroughly to examine it, after which he enters the cabinet and is thoroughly disrobed by a committee, while at the same time his clothing is examined. The committee, having satisfied itself that the medium is in possession of no robes, retires. The medium usually has an assistant who stays with

the spectators during the seance, and who occupies the time at this juncture by making an appropriate speech regarding the favorable conditions which should be maintained during the seance. During the brief address, the assistant usually stands directly in front of the closed cabinet curtains. Under the tail of his coat, behind, is an abundant supply of luminous silk forms, faces, hands, costumes, and two or three pencil-reaching rods. The medium slyly slips his hands through the curtains and helps himself to this liberal supply of spirit habiliments. The assistant now has the lights extinguished and takes his position in the front row with the sincere believers, where he can best see to it that proper conditions prevail — conditions in every way favorable to the successful conduct of the materialization seance.

#### 9. ECTOPLASM AND EVA C.

One European medium had to submit to a surgical operation at the hands of a skilled surgeon, because she had swallowed her masks when detection threatened. This woman is a ruminant. She swallows her paraphernalia and brings it up at will. She swallows the ectoplasm, too. I had some ectoplasm in my hands not two weeks ago. It is manufactured by the same man who makes the apparatus for magicians.

In my study of the case of Eva C., I have reached the same conclusion as that arrived at by certain ob-



servers who have made a critical study of the phenomena connected with this medium's performances, and that is: I believe that she swallows much of her material, and that she possesses the power to bring it up from her stomach or from a dilated oesophagus at will. Medical science has in its records between fifty and one hundred cases of just such remarkable individuals who are technically known as "ruminants." There is much evidence on record which goes to prove that Eva C. is a ruminant. She has been known to bleed freely from the mouth and gullet. Of course Doyle has objected to this explanation on the ground that she sometimes performs with a net sewn about her neck. The fact is that she seldom performs with this net sewn about her neck, out of hundreds of seances there being a record of its being used as a test only seven times, and that she refused to permit its further employment because in four out of these seven sittings she was unable to elude her observers and the seances were barren of results.

#### 10. THE TRICK OF READING SEALED WRITING

The mediums are very clever and employ many methods of getting your name. I remember well, on a cold wintry evening a few years back, attending a seance and carrying a friend's calling card in my overcoat pocket. I was careful to leave my own cards and all letters that might identify me at home, and I no-

ticed that the medium, during the evening, identified me and addressed me by the name of my friend's card which I had left in my overcoat pocket in the hallway.

On another occasion, when I had most carefully excluded from my person anything that could identify me, the medium promptly recognized me and called me by name during the seance, saying: "You are Doctor Sadler, and there is a spirit messenger here from the other world who has something to say to you." This case greatly puzzled me and I was some time in solving the problem — in fact I did not solve it, but on a return visit the maid in waiting on this medium let the "cat out of the bag" by asking me for some further instructions in connection with advice she had received at my hands in a clinic where she had come for help; and then when she was confronted with the charge admitted having given her employer my name. This but illustrates that if we can really get at the bottom of these cases we always find a purely human, perfectly natural explanation of the whole affair. It mystifies us only as the magician entertains and deceives us, because we do not know at first how they do it.

*Getting Your Name.* Of the many methods utilized for getting your name, some feature of the following procedure is quite universally employed by travelling mediums. The idea is to get an impression of your writing, including, of course, your name, that is not a

carbon impression. The impression is, in fact, invisible until after it is "developed." The paper used is a thin, highly glazed paper. A tablet of this paper is provided for the subject to write upon. He can make an inspection of the tablet if he so desire, and he will find nothing out of the ordinary.

The operator first prepares a few sheets of the paper by rubbing over one side of them with spermaceti wax which has been melted and mixed with a small amount of vaseline. The wax, being white, cannot be seen on the paper after the same has been coated with it. This prepared sheet is generally placed in the tablet two or three sheets below the top, coated side down, being held in place with library paste.

When the writing is done, an invisible impression is transferred from the waxed surface of the prepared sheet, to the sheet next under it. Of course this cannot be seen until developed, as the wax is very thin and is the color of the paper. After the subject writes his questions, and removes the sheet bearing them, the operator secures this tablet by almost any one of a number of secret means; and then he secretly removes the sheet bearing the impression and develops it by throwing on the sheet some powdered charcoal, and shaking the sheet around until the powder adheres to the wax, after which the surplus powder is dusted off. The writing appears plainly and may be easily read. Some performers use plumbago, lampblack, or coal



dust, instead of charcoal.

There are so many ways of gaining information as to what you write that it is safe to say that if the sitter in any seance or the inquirer of any medium ever indulges in any writing on the medium's premises, the medium will be able to gain an accurate knowledge of what was written. I have been able to ferret out more than a dozen different methods whereby a medium can gain a knowledge of what the sitter writes, and I have never written anything for a medium on their own paper and with the pencils they furnish, and on the premises, but what they were able to read the writing; but in no cases, extending over a period of twenty years, have mediums ever been able to read what I have written at home, which writing I have taken to the seance room and kept in my hands or in my own pocket.

*The Alcohol Method.* Perhaps the most universal method of reading sealed writing, which has been employed by mediums in the past, has been through the use of absolute or relatively absolute alcohol. These mediums take care that the writing is placed in the envelopes so that the written surface is against the face of the envelope. It is only necessary then, with a sponge or a handkerchief which may be concealed in the hair, the sleeve, or somewhere about the table, to moisten the front of the envelope with the alcohol which renders it transparent and the writing is entirely

clear to the medium. In a few seconds the alcohol evaporates leaving the paper smooth and dry, with no wrinkling of the surface, and there is no way of detecting that it has been applied.

#### 11. TRICK ENVELOPES

I have collected from mediums and conjurers more than a score of different methods of preparing trick envelopes for the deception of the spiritualistic inquirer. One method, which has come to be used in the past dozen years by many mediums, is to have a box of ordinary-appearing envelopes sitting on the table in the ante-room where the inquirers write their questions. Now, the medium takes one of these envelopes and with a pair of sharp scissors cuts a very small bit off one end and the bottom. The back side of the envelope is then discarded and only the front side with its flap is used. This half of the envelope, it will be found, will now very readily slip inside of another envelope and the two flaps will fit into each other very accurately. If the flap of the whole envelope is slightly moistened, it can be readily sealed to the flap of the dummy so as to avoid detection under the sharpest scrutiny. Now before the medium seals these two flaps together the spirit message is prepared and placed in the compartment between the two fronts, and after this trick envelope is thus prepared it is placed in the box containing the other innocent and honest envelopes which

it resembles in every way. When it is removed from this box in the presence of the sitter, there is certainly nothing to suggest any previous preparation, even though it be carefully examined: that is, provided the medium sits—as he always does—in such a position that the sitter is between him and the light.

The message is then dropped into the envelope by the medium, while perhaps the subject holds it open, it is sealed in the presence and full view of the sitter, after which the envelope is taken in the tips of the fingers of the medium's right hand and he requests the subject to hold the other end.

Now when the stage is all set, and after a suitable interlude of talking, and after a signal has been received that the spirit has written the message, the medium proceeds to tear off the end of the envelope himself, and while deftly holding the envelope in his left hand, he reaches into the front compartment with the fingers of his right hand, bringing out the message which he immediately hands to the enquirer, asking that it be examined and read. Now, as a rule the subject is considerably excited at this time—unless he is a cool-headed investigator—and during this little flurry it is an easy matter for the medium to slip the envelope just used into his pocket and bring forth therefrom a duplicate which has been prepared beforehand—a genuine envelope with the end torn off in exactly the same fashion as that which has just been used for the trick.



And after the inquirer has read his "spirit" message, this envelope can be handed over to him for a full and complete examination.

## 12. SLATE WRITING

There are, literally, scores of methods for practicing deception in slate writing. The basic trick is to exchange the slates right before your eyes without your detecting it. The methods are too numerous to describe in our limited space.

There are also chemical tricks, although they are not so much used. If a message be prepared with nitrate of silver and then breathed upon, it will vanish. If the slate be washed with salt water, the message appears but cannot be erased. There are also dozens of chemicals for writing invisible messages on paper, which will appear from heat, or from the application of a blotter saturated with other chemicals.

If a message be written on paper with a solution of sulphate of iron, it is invisible. If the paper be placed in an envelope moistened inside with a solution of nutgalls, the writing appears. The paper can be placed between slates just washed with the same solution, and the writing will soon be visible.

There are also slate writers who write with a small piece of pencil held on the end of a single finger by a flesh-colored piece of courtplaster with a hole in its center. In such cases the message is written while the

hand pinches the slate up under the table. There is a thimble used, sometimes, with holders attached containing colored crayons; but it requires an expert to use it.

*Trick Slates.* The "flap slate" has also been successfully used by fraudulent mediums. This looks very much like an ordinary innocent slate, except that it has a flap which fits neatly into the frame of the slate. Elaborate spirit messages can be written upon the slate under this flap, the slate can be critically examined and the writing of course is fully concealed. Now this flap fits sufficiently loose so that the medium can, in its manipulation, turn the slate over, remove the flap, and then when the slate is exposed the concealed message is in full view. Various modifications of this trick have been employed from time to time by the most successful mediums and it has been very difficult to detect the fraud.

### 13. THE OUIJA BOARD

In the vast majority of instances the phenomena of the ouija board represent more or less conscious and definite fraud. That is, the individual either consciously cheats, or is being hoodwinked by his own subconscious mind.

Perhaps the most monumental demonstration of the sophistries of the ouija board was made by two British lieutenants who were Turkish military prisoners at

Yozgad during the late World War.

These two young men, having heard of the recent outbreaks of Sir Oliver Lodge, and after reading the spiritistic ebullitions of Sir A. Conan Doyle, decided on the production of a little spirit phenomena on their own hook. These young men assembled about them some of their fellow prisoners of war, constructed a ouija board upon which they moved a glass, touched lightly by the fingers of two of them, and as a means at first of harmless diversion and entertainment, one of these young men began to fake "spirit" messages. He enjoyed the sensation of outwitting his fellow prisoners, and witnessing their looks of amazement and hearing their expressions of astonishment.

With the passing of days the fame of these young men grew. By fishing for information here and there and by means of clever guesswork and fortunate stabs in the dark they created for themselves an enviable reputation as "mystics," "psychics," and "sensitives." They became the talk of the whole camp. It seems to have been the intention of the deceiver to have made an early confession of his culpability and ask forgiveness, and to have explained that it was all a joke, but he got in farther and farther, and finally confessed to his associate that his part was all a fraud and the associate made the same confession. Then they decided to go on together and have a little more fun, as times were dull in this Turkish military camp.



The spare time of the camp for some time, turned its attention to "spooking," and soon the Turkish guards became interested and considerable disturbance was created at one time because of the belief on the part of the Turks that these mediums were sending out and receiving contraband military messages. Through the means of this apparently harmless prank, a tremendous belief in the occult and the supernatural was built up on the part of the British prisoners of war in this camp. The story is as remarkable as that chronicled by any medium of highest repute. No professional performer of spiritistic phenomena, or amateur dabbler in the occult, ever had a more remarkable experience than these two young men had in bamboozling their fellow prisoners.

These two mediums, if we may now call them such, were subjected to many and stringent tests by their fellows in the camp, and they always managed to come out by some clever ruse or manipulation, and to make good. Again and again they picked up bits of information dropped, which they cleverly weaved into elaborate stories and gave most impressive seances and imparted most astonishing information to the observers at these amateur "spook" circles.

#### 14. SPIRIT MOULDS

When in London, some years back, I was considerably interested by a group of mediums who were then

indulging in the art of producing moulds of hands, arms, and other parts of spirit materializations corresponding to some portion of the human form Divine—such as Doyle recently exploited. These mediums were then teaching that the spirits were able to materialize in our presence and that they were able thus to produce paraffine moulds of their hands, faces, feet, etc. Their preliminary preparation for seances of this sort, in addition to producing an expectation on the part of the sitters, was to immerse a large piece of paraffine wax in a basin of hot water, placing this melting, floating mass on a table in front of the cabinet with a basin of cold water handy by. The spirits always came out from the cabinet, whereupon they would apparently dip their hands or faces first into the melted paraffine in the basin of hot water and then into the basin of cold water, and this would be repeated as it seemed to require three or four dips in order to accumulate an amount of paraffine sufficiently thick to retain form. After this the spirit would stand up full length before the audience, and with considerable ceremony take the mould from the face or hand, as the case might be, and pass it out to the sitters for examination.

In those seances which I attended, this procedure was carried out under very strict guardianship and in the faintest possible light. But like all other hoaxes of this sort it was destined to be short-lived, as it was soon discovered that the mediums prepared in advance

for these seances by making paraffine masks from plaster moulds, so that when these alleged spirits came forth from the cabinet they had fitted over their faces or hands this previously prepared mould, so that in reality, as subsequent investigation disclosed, they did not dip their faces or hands into the hot paraffine, but they did dip them into the cold water so that when the spectators were given the moulds to inspect they were always wet and dripping.

#### 15. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAINTINGS

It has been my good fortune to know one or two individuals who have become experts in spirit photography—one who was formerly a professional medium, and another who dabbled in this thing as a sort of hobby. From these friends I had my first insight into some of the numerous methods employed by spirit photographers in their technique of deluding the public in general, and the faithful believers in particular. Among the many methods employed, the following may be mentioned: After a plate is developed which contains the portrait, let us say, of some spiritualistic believer, this negative if it has placed under it a sheet of sensitized paper, will, after it is exposed to the rays of the sun, exhibit in shadowy outline a print of the original portrait. Now this same process can be carried out with still another negative, allowing a shorter period for the exposure, and this technique will permit addi-



tional figures and faces to appear in mystic and shadowy outline about the original photograph.

One spirit photographer of renown will give you an apparently innocent looking blank sheet of paper, and while engaged in talking his mediumistic babble, will lay this blank piece of paper under an ordinary appearing blotting pad resting on top of the table. The most careful scrutiny may be maintained over this process to see that no substitution of the paper is made, and yet a photograph appears upon that sheet of paper within a few minutes' time. Now, an invisible photograph was there on the apparently blank piece of paper all the while. A picture had been taken on this special material, known as solio paper, the image of which had been bleached out with bichloride of mercury. The harmless looking blotting pad resting on the table was moistened with a solution of "hypo," and in this way, in a few short moments the photograph was quite fully restored.

*Tricks of the Trade.* Another medium can show you an ordinary blank canvas, and without really taking this thing out of your sight will be able to produce a beautiful oil painting which inspection shows has been so recently done that the paint is still wet. Now in this case the painting was there all the time, but a blank canvas was neatly held in place over it by means of a little gum, so that all this medium had to do was to divert your attention for a moment and cleverly rip

off the plain or camouflage canvas. Spiritualists are always much impressed—at least they used to be—by the fact that the painting was wet at the time it was so mysteriously produced. Many have argued that this constitutes sufficient and abundant proof of genuineness. So it is very easy for the spiritualistic conjurers to accommodate them in this superstition, as by rubbing a little “poppy oil” on these paintings they appear to be fresh, or as commonly described “wet.”

*Doyle's Spirit Photographs.* Among the many spirit photographs collected by Doyle and offered by him as proof in support of the contention that spirit entities can so materialize themselves as to be subject to photography, there is one case that demands more than passing attention. He tells about having purchased a plate, examined the camera, and how he exposed and developed the plate with his own hands. “No hands but mine ever touched the plate,” he says. That he must have been the subject of some cute prank, notwithstanding his impressive declaration that he so carefully supervised the photographic technique in this case, is shown by his own admission, when he feels called upon further to explain, that “on examining with a powerful lens the face of the ‘extra’ I have found such a marking as is produced in newspaper process work.” Now it should be explained to the reader that the half-tones which have been prepared for reproduction in newspapers, magazines, or books, show, when they are

printed, certain little lines of dots when such a printed picture is examined under a magnifying glass. The same thing is characteristic of lantern slides; these dots will appear on the screen if the picture has been made from a printed half-tone reproduction of a photograph, whereas the picture will be smooth and minus these dots if the lantern slide has been made directly from the photographic plate.

Now Doyle admits that this picture, the taking of which he so stringently supervised, shows these dots which indicate that it was made from a magazine or newspaper reproduction of the original photograph. Doyle admits all this, and goes so far as to grant that perhaps his picture was in some way made from a previous reprint of a photograph, but he further maintains: "However that may be it was most certainly supernormal, and not due to any manipulation or fraud." What an astounding conclusion for an intelligent man to reach!

*Celluloid Ghosts.* There seems to be no end to the technical methods whereby a trick photographer can produce the simulated spirit photographs. One method which has been successfully employed is to cut out the figure of a ghost in celluloid or some other transparent material and carefully attach it to the lens of the camera. After the exposure of this technique others produced a tiny ghost which could be hidden in the camera and projected through a magnifying glass, after



the technique of the common magic lantern, so that it would thus appear on the plate when the same was exposed in the camera.

Some years ago I offered one hundred dollars to a local spirit photographer for a spirit photograph in which I would be permitted to examine every step of the process. My proposition was accepted but when I desired to make an elaborate examination of the camera before the first step was taken, my friend the photographer backed out. He said my materialistic skepticism was of such a rank order that he feared it would entirely inhibit the activities of the spirits. Undoubtedly this chap had a miniature ghost in his camera.

Among the older tricks of this sort of trade was the substitution of plates, and among the newer methods are those in which the ghost is painted with sulphate of quinine or other chemicals on the ground glass screen. Such a figure would be entirely invisible when dry, and would pass the closest inspection, as indeed it has at my hands. With such a preparation, all that is required is to in some way supply a little moisture and then upon the operation of the camera the ghost figure will appear.

*Chemistry of Spook Painting.* Recently the "spook" painters have worked out a new technique for producing invisible portraits. They have discovered that sulpho-cyanide of potassium can be employed for invisible red, that ferro-cyanide of potassium will serve for blue, and

tannin for black. They are thus able to produce a three-color invisible photograph on a canvas, which will stand the casual inspection of the ordinary sitter. These chemicals are all invisible when dry, but if they are gently sprayed with a weak solution of tincture of iron the picture will gradually appear, and the operators have been very ingenious in methods whereby they will place the canvas, while waiting for the spirit to paint the portrait, in such a unique position that the spray can be mechanically applied; and thus they are able to bring the picture before the very eyes of the sitter without having to remove the canvas from the room to be sprayed.

#### 16. THE CONCLUSION

As far as the physical phenomena of spiritualism are concerned, what only can be the conclusion of any intelligent, sound-minded person who has taken the time to investigate the subject? From the earlier performances of the Fox Sisters down to the latest medium to be exploited at the present time, even the half-hearted and amateurish investigations on the part of untrained observers have resulted in disclosing a continuous trail of deception and fraud. Whatever may be said in behalf of the claims regarding the "psychic" and more mental and spiritual aspects of spiritualism, which we have not yet considered, there remains no ground—absolutely no scientific basis—for the physical

and materializational claims of modern spiritualism.

Many large rewards, both in this country and in Great Britain, still remain unclaimed, which can be had any day by any medium who can, under fair test conditions, demonstrate the possibility of physical phenomena being produced by spirit agencies. And in my opinion these rewards will remain unclaimed as the years roll by.

The facts are that the mediums cannot stand the test. Those engaged in the production of physical phenomena, materialization, etc., are all deliberate, conscious frauds. In twenty-five years, I have not come in contact, in any capacity whatsoever, with a single physical manifestation medium, but what I have been able either to detect the fraud, or impose those conditions which would have led to immediate detection, but which were very wisely rejected by the medium. That is, in the case of every medium we have gone in to investigate we have immediately detected fraud, or the medium has declined further investigation or flatly refused the fair and reasonable conditions imposed.

I talked with Mr. Thurston at luncheon one day while he was here recently. I think he is the greatest magician on the stage today. He said that it is his belief that all performances done for money and as a commercial proposition are fraudulent.

No sooner does some medium hail from a foreign



shore, or rise up to eminence from our own native heath, than some shrewd investigator effects her exposure. Most eminent mediums are short-lived—their career is meteoric. They cannot stand the searchlight of truth. They are not able to withstand the acid test of investigation. Sooner or later our spirit idols fall, faith in our favorite medium is shattered, but with child-like trust and confidence we go forth in quest of a new idol, saddened and somewhat wiser, but none the less easily beguiled into the belief that, whereas one was false, our new find will be true. And scores of mediums who go on successfully for a season, would be exposed much sooner if they were investigated, not by their friends and believers in the cult, as is usually the case, but by hard-headed men of scientific training—by those who know the laws of physics, chemistry and electricity, and those who habitually employ these very tricks as a part of their professional careers, as is the case with magicians and similar experts who deal with rope-tying, handcuffs, and other sorts of sleight-of-hand performances, designed to mystify and entertain the public.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PSYCHIC PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

**S**PIRITUALISM is not a matter which can be finally tried and adjudged in the experimental laboratory. While the investigations which I have made into spiritistic phenomena have convinced me that practically all so-called materializations and other transactions of the "seance" are purely fraudulent—sheer chicanery and trickery—it is not my intention to assert that all so-called occult or spiritistic phenomena are of a fraudulent nature. There may be a residue that will have to be accounted for otherwise, but it has never been my privilege to come in contact with mediums of this unusual sort. Such genuine spirit phenomena, of course, would be beyond the pale of scientific investigation. They constitute problems for study by the theologians and philosophers.

#### 1. PHANTASY AND IMAGINATION

There can be little doubt but that certain human beings possess a tremendously large "bump" of phantasy. That is, they have the day dreaming faculty developed to the point where it has acquired the pro-

portions of a well-nigh separate personality. This must be the case with many clairvoyants, mediums, and other occult practitioners. They might be said to possess an automatic power of phantasy—one that acts quite independently of their ordinary mental processes—and one which forms its conclusions and formulates its statements quite without the conscious knowledge of the higher powers of such individuals' minds.

As we ascend in the realms of thought, we reach more and greater possibilities of mental confusion and mind deception. It is quite impossible for the very young child to discriminate between imagination, memory, and images. The child of three years will vividly describe his meetings with lions and other wild beasts in the back yard, and may relate these things as real experiences which have just happened. He is really recalling the pictures of lions from his story books, or reviving the memory images of the beasts observed at the zoo; and many of our mediums and clairvoyants are so constituted of mind that their own subconscious plays the same subtle trick upon them. They see, hear, feel and perceive things that have not just happened, as facts, and as such portray them. These experiences are the phantasms of a short circuited memory acting under the impulse and inspiration of a misguided imagination.

In the case of these mediums, the mind has grown up in some respects, but in this particular feature they



have remained juvenile, and we all know that the younger we are, the more active, vivid and uncontrolled is the imagination and phantasy.

What is to hinder an over-developed phantasy from setting in operation fictitious feelings and impressions and, by its well known powers of reconstruction, creating spiritistic forms, unreal apparitions, and the fantastic concepts of the spirit world?

The highly organized nervous system of a psychically unstable individual can easily imagine itself to be the hero of the moving picture play, identifying itself with all the experiences portrayed on the screen, as indeed he will in the case of the public procession in which some prominent individual, or some hero, is on parade; such individuals will imagine themselves to be the hero and will experience all the pleasant and gratifying emotions experienced by the hero himself. This sort of "identification," or, as it has been termed, "wish evolvment," furnishes the psychological interpretation for a vast number of mediumistic phenomena. The mediums desire to be what they profess to be and thus, through the mental processes of "projection," on the one hand, and the phantasy of "identification," on the other, they seek to bring about their "wish evolvment;" and thus, from the unlimited supply of material in the reservoir of the subconscious mind they bring forth those things which complete the picture and enable them, through their clairvoyance

and clair-audience, to depict to the devotees of spiritism the images of departed spirits and to hear messages from another world.

Mental confusion, crossed wires, endocrine disturbances, and a dozen other influences, mental, chemical, and physical, not to say spiritual, may all contribute to the making of a first class, sincere, utterly self-deceived medium or clairvoyant.

Personality determines the psychic tendency of those unique individuals; and we now know that personality is largely determined by the secretions of the endocrine, or ductless gland system, of the body. There is not only a psychic basis for spiritualistic tendencies, but also an hereditary and a chemical basis.

## 2. DETACHED COMPLEXES

You should understand that the human mind is represented by a very intricate organization and grouping of cells, which hold the patterns of memory and thought, and which are undoubtedly formed after the fashion of groups, systems, constellations, and so on. Now it is known that certain groups of mind cells or systems, commonly known as *complexes*, may be cut off, as it were, from active connection with the major mental powers, and may behave in an insubordinate manner, playing the rôle of a psychic insurgent, as regards the mental life as a whole. These detached complexes are undoubtedly present in some forms of

insanity, and they are able to assert themselves in such a fashion as to cause the demented individual to hear voices and in many other ways to disturb the mental equilibrium.

It is highly probable that, in some cases of clairvoyants and mediums, we have a mental condition that actually borders on insanity. These individuals may be suffering from a "complex detachment" in a very mild degree, so that they are able from time to time to recognize these voices and other impressions that come up from this sort of dissociation, complex detachment, or double personality — or whatever name it may be called — and they are, therefore, wholly sincere when they represent to others that they have heard these voices in the mind as from an outside source. I am convinced that many mediums and other spiritistic enthusiasts have so persistently and successfully built up their "ghost complexes;" that they have so effectively come to transfer the "reality feeling" to these "spook" creations of their own subconscious mind; that they have so ardently welded their emotions to these spirit concepts, that in time, this grouping of complexes, having to do with spirit beliefs and desires, becomes so powerfully entrenched and so highly influential in the psychic life of such individuals that they become capable of instituting some sort of psychic insurrection, and come thus more or less fully to dominate the conscious life, opinions, and be-



havior of their victims.

An individual may bury certain unwelcome ideas or unpleasant emotions in his subconscious, from whence, as time passes, they may come forth again to plague and harrass him. So may the mediums and clairvoyants, as the years pass, bury things in their subconscious minds, from whence these long forgotten ideas and emotions may constantly spring forth during the spirit seance to impersonate, through the process of "projection" and the technique of "transference," the person, mannerisms, and voices of dead and departed human beings.

### 3. COMPLEX DISSOCIATION

Now it is believed that some individuals possess such a power of dissociation, in connection with a peculiar and uncanny concentration of the attention, that at any one moment the whole stream of consciousness may be so directed and so successfully diverted that the "feeling of reality" — the sense of reality — may be so focused upon a single idea or desire as to shut every other sensory feeling or emotional experience out of the mind's eye, or the awareness of consciousness; and thus the whole psychic machinery would be concentrated upon this single idea of the mind. In this way, psychologists believe that mediums sometimes come to materialize disembodied spirits in the eyes of their own minds, to become — mind, body, and soul —

possessed with the reality of the thing which they think they see outside of their minds, but which, in reality, lives and functions on the threshold of their own psychic life and which had its inception, origin, and birth within their own subconscious mind.

In the presence of this temporary sort of complex dissociation, it would appear that in the case of these highly suggestible individuals, that some sort of dominating and all-pervading idea — now free from natural restraints and customary restrictions — sweeps through the mind and out over the body, completely dominating and absolutely controlling the organism to such an extent as to be able to produce cramps, paralyses, and fits, as regards the body; while, in a mental way, the patient may become as one possessed of the devil on the one hand, while on the other hand she may establish herself as a spiritualistic medium, or she may go forth in some noble and daring rôle as did the heroic Maid of Orleans.

There can be no doubt that the minds of many so-called mediums are striking illustrations of that dissociation among groups of conscious mental processes — they verge on actual hysteria and double personality. In so far as this is the case, one must in fairness admit that such a medium is not fundamentally (I mean morally) a fraud, but rather the subject of an elusive, functional disorder, and at the same time clever enough to capitalize the disorder and make it provide

the necessities of life. In whatever instances this is the case, the so-called messages from the dead are made up of the more or less coherent trains of ideas that troop in from the marginal consciousness in response to those suggested ideas which come into the medium's attention when he or she is in a state of semi- or complete trance.

#### 4. THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

The subconscious mind, like the atomic theory, is a splendid and practical working concept, whether it really exists or not. One thing we are sure of — the thing which it stands for is an actual part of our mental life. While sensations can produce ideas, it must also be borne in mind that ideas can produce sensations.

It is impossible to conceive of the possibilities of mind deception, extending from the mental delusions of fictitious physical disease to the consummate deceptions of spiritualistic phantasms, that would be made possible by a working conspiracy between imagination, phantasy, and memory, when all three of these powers are unstable from heredity or irritated and diseased by a poisoned blood stream.

It is my opinion that much of the psychology of clairvoyants and spirit mediums takes place out in the dim consciousness of the marginal state. That is, these spirit manifestations, in their ideas and images, originate in the subconscious mind, much as the phantasms



of the dream world originate during the night season, when the higher reasoning, the logical, analytical and conscious centers of the brain are asleep — dead to the world.

Unquestionably the seance room, as conventionally conducted, constitutes a very favorable setting — one which is in every way calculated to encourage the emergence of visual or auditory hallucinations from the realms of the unconscious. These no sooner appear than the expectant attitude of both medium and spectator disposes them early to transfer to these children of subconscious creation that “feeling of reality,” which justifies the consciousness from that time on in its recognition and reception of these phenomena as a bona fide experience.

Hysterical patients, in a former generation, were burned at the stake as witches. Today they preside over parlor seances and perform as spirit mediums. And today, as in olden times, their performances are characterized by falsehood and duplicity, as well as by a continuous series of impersonations. It should be remembered that hysterical women are not only able to impersonate serious diseases of the body in their attacks, but that they are equally gifted in psychologic legerdemain, in that they are able to impersonate, and otherwise make representations to onlookers, the spirits of departed human beings.

## 5. THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SPIRITUALISM

In the mind of the primitive savage it constitutes but a short step in reasoning (from his dream-experiences), to lead to the belief that his "consciousness" could be absent from the body, and so these two ideas put together — or rather, the one growing out of the other — lead the primitive mind to believe in "consciousness" separate and apart from the physical body, and thus the foundation is securely laid for a belief in spiritism. Dreams seem to endow the mind with a power that is quite independent of time and space, and the fancies of the dream world are not wholly unlike those extraordinary claims and superstitions of the spirit medium.

As far as psychology is concerned — the physical sciences — there is no spirit. Spiritual forces are not able to manifest themselves to the instruments employed in scientific investigation. They are immaterial, and science deals only with the material.

Science comes more and more to look upon that which lays claim to being supernatural, or spiritual, in the performance of spirit mediums, as being an emanation from the unconscious realms of the medium's own mind, and that the entire performance is subject to natural explanation by the laws of physio-psychology; that the laws of physiology on the one hand, and of psychology, on the other, are adequate quite fully to explain these apparently supernatural phenomena.

The very nature of the content of these spirit messages and revelations is sufficient to brand them as wholly human, and in every way very ordinary and utterly devoid of any ear-marks of that superiority which would in any way serve to class them as extraordinary or identify them as supernatural.

Spiritualism panders to that egotistic human desire for excitement and adventure. The average man likes to dabble with the extraordinary. We tend to overlook the remarkable nature of the common occurrences of everyday life, and we long to make contact with big things and unusual events. We enjoy the exhilaration of talking through the air; wireless telephony and radio appeal to our imagination; and we long to project the experiment one step further — to hoist our spiritual aerials and get the wireless waves from other worlds. The one seems little more impossible than the other, that is, provided we but lead ourselves to admit the existence of a spiritual world and the reality of spiritual forces.

#### 6. THE FEAR OF DEATH

The biology of spiritualism is rooted in the pain-pleasure complex of the human mind and nervous system. For numerous reasons, the primitive mind of the savage fears death. Death is usually preceded or accompanied by pain and suffering. Death spells the extinction of all possibility of pleasure enjoyment, and



therefore death becomes the symbol — the goal, or culmination — of suffering, agony and pain. It becomes the central idea that stands for cessation of pleasure, and therefore, the primitive mind, on the basis of the desire to avoid pain and experience pleasure, desires in every way possible, in its efforts to survive the fear of death, to prove the unreality — the non-existence — of death. And so the unconscious mind of even the primitive tribes reaches out with a persistent longing to grasp any and all evidences and proofs that would tend to strengthen the belief of spirit survival after death, and thus directly and indirectly, in every way possible, to prove that death is but an illusion — but the vestibule to another world — the veil behind which occurs the birth of another existence into a new and higher life.

We are thus coming to that place where we are able clearly to recognize that the key to spiritualism — that is to the non-fraudulent, non-materialistic phase of the phenomena — is to be found in the physiology of the unconscious. Here in this mysterious realm of the human intellect are locked up the secrets and mysteries of mediumship, clairvoyance, trances, automatic writing, and other of the real and respectable manifestations of modern spiritualism.

#### 7. WHAT IS A SPIRIT?

*Physiology is the key by which we will open the psycho-*

*logical lock which will enable us to begin our explorations of the secret birthplace and lodgement of the human well-springs of modern spiritualism.*

What then is a spirit? I would offer two definitions:

1. Spirit, in a theological sense, is an invisible, non-material entity, or intelligence, operating in the spiritual world in accordance with spiritual laws and for the accomplishment of spiritual purposes; and limited, in its contact with the human mind, to the making of spiritual suggestions and to communicating with the spiritual monitors which are assumed to indwell the human mind. The proof of their existence must ever be without the pale of science, and their recognition is purely and wholly a matter of belief. Their contemplation is a matter of faith, and their reality and existence are not for scientific investigation.

2. Spirits, as recognized and studied by science, as pertaining to mediumship and the phenomena of modern spiritualism, are psychic projections — fantastic creations of the subconscious mind. They have a biologic origin; they are the deceptive offspring of a working conspiracy between the physiological and psychological powers resident in, and operating upon the deep and unknown deposits of human sensation, memory and emotions, which we commonly call the subconscious mind, but which is more properly and scientifically known as “the great Unconscious.”

The spirits, then, that we deal with so largely in the

study of spiritualism, exist within the human body, and from the realms of the unconscious centers of the mind project themselves outward for the production of their phenomena. They do not exist without the body and come in to possess the body, and thus work upon the mind as an extraneous spiritual force. In brief, as far as science has been able to discover, the spirit operating in connection with occult manifestations functions only in connection with the body, and so far science has not been brought face to face with any phenomena that cannot be adequately explained on this hypothesis, or that cannot be reproduced by psychic manipulations and in accordance with natural laws.

Science, therefore, makes two challenges to the spiritualist, and they are as follows:

1. That the existence of a spirit separate and apart from the body, operating to produce spiritualistic phenomena, is as yet unproved. The scientist calls for further proof — science asks for evidence.

2. Science challenges the ability of spirits, the projections of the subconscious mind, to affect any human body with which it is not connected, except as through the ordinary agencies of suggestion and other well-known channels of psychic influence.

#### 8. WHY ARE MEDIUMS NECESSARY?

The spiritualists tell us that mediums are necessary



for the same reason that you have to have copper wire to conduct electricity; you cannot conduct it through a board fence. They tell us we cannot do it on our own hook, we have to have peculiar, sensitive mediums. You see our preparatory training has built up in us the idea that special people can do special things and it is very easy to make us believe this theory about spirit mediums.

The psychic laws regulating this thing are based on what we call "complex formations." The brain cells in the human body are organized on the principle of the solar system. And these things can become dissociated so that you can have one part of your mind talk with the other part. You know how one part of your mind can be so engrossed in thought, that you can read two pages and never know it, never have the slightest recollection of what you read. We do these things and they are perfectly normal and natural. If you can keep your thoughts centered on spiritualism you are all right, but if you go too far with them, we will put you in a blue wagon and haul you off to the psychopathic hospital. Just as long as you say you hear a spirit talking to you you can get away with it; but as soon as you say you hear voices and see things they will put you in an asylum. One leads to affluence and a large income, and the other incarcerates you.

Not only do we find more women functioning as mediums, as compared with men, but we find instruc-

tion from the spirit world explaining that women are better mediums than men.

The spiritualists claim that women are less likely to be mercenary than men. They further tell us that the spiritual world, inferring at least some degree of materiality, is much more beautiful than our world, and one writer goes on to describe, in superlative terms, their rivers, lakes, and oceans, their beautiful cities and homes; and explains that a woman's finer sense and more artistic tendency is more easily brought into sympathetic contact with, and more highly appreciative of, those things, and therefore serves as the better channel between the higher spiritual and lower material worlds.

So far as my personal experience goes, I have never detected anything in the line of mediumship, thus far, which would call for a resort to a spiritual hypothesis for explanation. I have met, in my practice, peculiar psychic cases, some of which I have not been able fully to understand in the light of physiologic and psychologic laws, but as before stated, none of these have been mediums, and in no case did they claim to communicate with the dead.

In ordinary psychic experience, when disjunction occurs in the mind — when a constellation of complexes inaugurate an insurrection and try to set up business for themselves, they usually seek to displace the real self — to supplant the actual ego of the per-

sonality — and thus establish themselves in the place of power, and immediately to assume control of the mental actions and nervous behavior of the individual. This is what we see taking place in hysteria. Now, it seems that in the case of the medium, this disjuncted, or insubordinate, minor personality, instead of crossing swords with the reigning ego of the psychic realm, rather chooses to establish itself as a separate entity — as a minor personality, distinct and separate from the mind and ego of its origin. Thus it professes to be foreign to the real self of the individual, alleging that it is an outside entity, often a discarnate spirit, present from a higher and invisible world.

How easy for this detached group of psychic complexes to take one step further, after organizing itself into a subconscious source of feeling and information, to relegate to itself the prerogatives of a departed spirit, and to palm itself off on the credulous and superstitious mind of its indwelling as a “spirit control,” as the discarnate spirit of some departed friend or relative of recent times, or the disembodied ego of some prince or hero of olden days. So our new personality, so mystically set up in business, proceeds to borrow the mind and muscles, the talking mechanism of the medium, as a means of expression on this so-called material plane to which it has returned for various alleged benevolent purposes.



## 9. THE TECHNIQUE OF "PROJECTION"

"Projection" is the technique of reversing the physiology of the conduction of sensory impulses from the body to the brain, there to form ideas, images, memories, etc. In "projection" this process is reversed — ideas and images are aroused in the mind and from there travel outward and are recognized through the sense organs as having had origin outside the body. Ordinarily, our visual images and our auditory sounds go with the feelings and emotions which they arouse and which accompany them, for registration and attention in the archives of memory; I say ordinarily these sights and sounds, as well as other sensory impressions, originate outside of the body as the result of its contact with the external and material world.

Now, if we imagine a reversal of this process — that instead of these symbols of material things, these sights and sounds originating without the mind and external to it, and passing in as sensory impressions from the nervous system to the brain, to be there recognized by the mind and therein to be recorded and retained as memories — if we can imagine a reversal of this process so that we would have arising, down in the unconscious centers of the mind, various memory images and sounds which would travel outward over the nerves to the center of hearing and vision, there to be recognized, there in reality to appear just as if they had come from without in the normal manner (and as they no doubt

originally did arise before they were buried in the forgotten regions of the unconscious), then you will have a picture in your mind of the *technique of projection*. Your imagination need go but one step farther — to throw these sounds and images from the seeing and hearing centers of the mind, out of the body into the external world, and you have the foundation all laid for perfect hallucination. In this way an hysterical individual, a spiritualistic medium, or insane person, will be able to see and hear things that do not exist — that is, that do not exist in the external world — and they are not discoverable except to those people who, from whatever cause, are “seeing things” and “hearing things.”

This sort of “projection” is, to a certain extent, normal to all of us, and is no doubt unconsciously practiced (to a limited degree) by most of us. Occasionally we run across an individual who has become a victim of this sort of thing in one particular phase of his life. He is thoroughly sane and rational in every other avenue of thought, but on some one thing he has become a monomaniac. He hears and sees things that are not real, his mind is not controlled by reason and is not dominated by logic in this particular realm of thought, as in all others and when this is well marked and classic, we say that such a patient has *paranoia*.

We are quite likely to project some of our own fears and feelings on other people — it is notorious that we

have a tendency to judge other people by ourselves. We judge many of our own acts by the way in which we think our friends and neighbors would judge us. Our standards of morality are largely those that are "projected" from the consciences of other people upon us. We are influenced by tribal standards; we are governed largely by fashion; we regulate our lives in accordance with convention; we are constantly interchanging ideas and feelings, emotions and reactions, between ourselves and other people.

*Origin and Nature of Projection.* It would seem that primitive people — savages — were wont to project their ideas and emotional reactions on a great variety of things, both animate and inanimate, and so these simple children of Nature came to endow rocks, clouds, rivers, not to mention the sun, moon and stars, with spirits and various supernatural attributes as shown by the superstitious beliefs of ancient peoples, as well as the highly organized mythology of the Greeks and other olden tribes. As the race developed it was observed that animals breathed, and then the savage saw the mist arise from the waterfall, looking not unlike the condensation of his breath on a frosty morning. How easy for the primitive mind to reason that the waterfall had a spirit as shown in the mist floating from the plunging waters. And so, later on, the trees were endowed with spirits, and the whole primitive psychology of a spirit world was built up — which still



clings to the human mind and infests the human consciousness, predisposing in such a deep-seated, pathological fashion, the men and women, even of a civilized day and generation, to the sophistries and vagaries of spiritualism.

#### 10. THE "REALITY FEELING"

Thus we see that in certain peculiar types and temperaments the "reality feeling" works very well in connection with the clairaudient state — automatic hearing. And it is easy to suppose that in a seance many individuals whose minds are attuned — who are *en rapport* as the professionals call it — would be able to see and hear the same things the medium would. It is a sort of collective sensation, or collective illusion — some one has called it "collective hypnotism."

Every now and then some one arises who attempts to make other people believe in the things which they see and hear in their own minds. Self-styled "prophets" arise to convince us of the reality of their visions. Odd geniuses appear who tell us of the voices they hear, and if they seem fairly sane and socially conventional in every way, they are sometimes able to build up vast followings, to create cults and establish churches; whereas, if they are too bold in their imaginings, if they see a little too far or hear a little too much, they are promptly seized and quickly lodged safe within the confines of an insane asylum.

When an individual has a great variety of these visualizations, and when he hears too many voices, we readily drag him from his pedestal as prophet or high priest of spiritualism, haul him before a sanity commission, adjudge him insane and confine him in the crazy house. That is the penalty of allowing his "feeling of reality" to once gain possession of the human intellect, of indulging in the failure to discriminate between the creatures of consciousness and the creatures of the material world, in the practical affairs of life.

If we intently believe anything, if we ardently will to believe a certain thing, it greatly helps us in transferring our memory images and our imaginative creations of the mind from one psychic association to another; that is, to transfer the "feeling of reality," which belongs to an external visual sense, to an association that is purely and properly a visual image of consciousness; or to transfer a "feeling of reality" connected with the reception of sound waves through the external ear, to a concept or sensation of sound which is internal in origin, but which is made real to consciousness by such a transfer of these emotions and reactions which go by the name of "reality feeling."

#### 11. DOUBLE PERSONALITY

Double, or multiple personality (for sometimes there are more than two) is one of the most interesting psychic phenomena to be described in modern times. That an

individual may actually possess a dual psychic nature, may actually be one person one day and another the following, and still a third a few days subsequently, is a fact now well established in the study of abnormal psychology.

Interesting as it would be further to go into this question here, space will not permit, and we can only touch upon it as an illustration of the manner in which some sorts of psychic phenomena may be adequately explained.

In cases of double personality, individuals may wander off and be under the guidance of the subordinate personality, and then return, after days or weeks, not knowing where they have been or what has transpired. Under the influence of one personality, a girl will go into the woods and gather garter snakes and bring them home in boxes addressed to her other personality, just to witness the consternation of the other individual when the wriggling reptiles crawled out of the box when it was opened. One personality is afraid of snakes, the other is not; again one personality may be able to write shorthand, the other cannot; one may speak French fluently, while the other knows not a word of the language. Those are but a few illustrations to show how one personality may know absolutely nothing of what the other personality, dwelling in the same mind, may say or do.

It is my opinion that about seventy-five per cent of



our commonplace spiritistic manifestations are frauds — conscious, deliberate, commercial frauds, and that about twenty-five per cent belong to the order which we are describing at this time, and include the possible cases of actual spiritual or supernatural phenomena, which I, it will be observed, all the way along, accept as possible, though I have never personally come in contact with but one or two cases that could lay even remote claim to falling into this last named group.

What a calamity that the uncertain cerebrations of such abnormal minds should come to be regarded by such a large number of people as constituting information from a supernatural source, and wisdom of Divine origin; or that these ebullitions of automatic, psychic origin in the human mind, should come to be regarded by tens of thousands of persons as communications from the discarnate spirits of departed friends and relatives. The time has certainly come to apply common sense methods of reasoning to our investigations of psychic phenomena, and to apply rigid, sober-minded, scientific tests to all men and women who claim to be channels of either supernatural communication, or mediums through whom disembodied spirits manifest themselves to living men and women.

## 12. SOMNAMBULISM

Perhaps there is little difference between the performances of the sleep walker and the phenomena of

the trance medium. They are each in more or less of an unnatural and artificial state of mind, and are more or less automatically executing their various actions.

In other cases, when these subordinate personalities or constellations of complexes start on a rampage they exceed the limits of a mere mental mood, although they fall short of carrying their insurrection to the point of an independent existence such as would be exemplified by trances, cataleptic hysteria, or spirit voices, and then such an individual experiences the keen suffering which accompanies the variegated vagaries of neurasthenia, brain fag, nervous exhaustion, psychasthenia, etc.

We are all more or less familiar with the somnambulistic phenomena of the "sleep walker;" how he will automatically perform marvelously intricate pedestrian feats while oblivious to all surroundings, and utterly unconscious in his own mind of the things which he does as he goes forth on these extraordinary nocturnal strolls. This common phenomenon is so well understood that attention only needs to be called to it to emphasize the fact that sleep walkers are unconscious of what they are doing and that they continue to do it exceedingly well as long as they are not aroused from their slumbers, or otherwise molested in their performance.

Now, in the case of numerous phenomena connected with abnormal psychology in general and with

mediumistic performances in particular, we have conditions that are in every way identical with, and analogous to, the sleep walker's automatic performances. In the case of the sleep walker, the subconscious mind is directing the legs — the feet are made to execute the mandates of the great unconscious — while in the case of automatic writing it is the hands that have fallen under the control of the subconscious centers. In automatic talking the tongue and speaking centers of the mind are dominated by the unconscious. In the case of hearing voices and seeing images of supposed spirits, we have the same general condition prevailing, only in these latter cases it is the sense of hearing and the sense of sight that have become in their turn the victims of subconscious domination — the subject of this outward projection of subconscious machinations.

*An Interesting Case.* Not long ago Doctor Prince reported a case of dissociation, or multiple personality, which is very interesting when studied in the light of mediumship. It should be borne in mind that in these cases of multiple personality the mind is sort of split up, or "fissured," after the fashion of a tree with many branches which in turn are connected with numerous similar sub-branches.

This interesting individual was Doris Fisher, who had five personalities including the primary one. Before the death of her mother she had at least two or three personalities, the uncertainty being due to the



fact that she claimed one of her personalities was a spirit. Here we have scientific proof of the psychic origin of spirit entities in the human intellect. Here is a case which directly proves the psychic origin of much that appears in the performances of modern spirit mediumship.

### 13. AUTOMATIC WRITING

The automatic talkers and writers, those who "speak with tongues," etc., constitute the most interesting group of individuals who live their queer lives out on the borderland between the normal and the abnormal in psychology. These individuals are very interesting to study, from a psychologic standpoint. I have recently been privileged to thoroughly examine and carefully study not less than half a dozen men and women who are supposed to have the "gift of tongues," and who are prominently identified with numerous present-day religious movements that exhibit these gifts of the spirit as evidence of Heavenly authenticity.

I have had some very interesting experiences in connection with the study of automatic writers. I remember one case which came under my observation some twenty years ago, and after giving this man a thorough course of instruction regarding the physiology and psychology of his strange performances, he gradually lost the power of automatic writing and for the past six or eight years has been wholly unable to

indulge in this phenomenon. Years ago he was able to take a pencil in his hand, drop off into a sort of passive dream-state, when suddenly the pencil would start in to write messages, as he supposed, having their origin in the spirit world. In this connection let me record it as my opinion that automatic writing and the automatism manifested in the ouija board performance are very nearly, if not quite, one and the same thing. That is, I regard them as identical in their psychologic roots — in their psychic origin and direction.

I have found it exceedingly difficult to segregate the sincere and subconscious automatic writers from those performers whose writing is more or less controlled — those who are to a certain degree consciously fraudulent.

There seems to be an inherent tendency on the part of these psychic freaks and so-called “sensitives” to exaggerate their gifts and, childlike, magnify their performances. The mental attitude of the medium seems to be to try and outdo other “psychics,” and so there is ever present this sort of urge to the perpetration of fraud.

Notwithstanding the frauds to be found among automatic writers, there is, nevertheless, a residue who are wholly sincere, honest men and women who believe they are “spirit controlled,” or that in some other way their automatic writings have a spiritual origin.

## 14. TELEPATHY AND MIND READING

Telepathy has been variously called mind reading, thought transference, and universal intelligence, and it has been more associated with the propaganda of spiritualism in Great Britain than in this country. This is probably due to the fact that early in his spiritistic investigations Myers attached a great deal of importance to the rôle of telepathy in connection with various spiritistic and occult manifestations. Myers was so impressed with the province of telepathy in the study of spiritualism that he once stated that it was "almost the fundamental doctrine of spiritualistic philosophy."

Telepathy should not be confused with alleged second sight, intuition, clairvoyance, etc. It rests upon an entirely different and separate hypothesis. In this connection it is well to remind the reader that these peculiar psychic tendencies appear to run in families.

I think the consensus of opinion among the scientists today would be that telepathy is merely a popular word symbol which has come into use in explanation of certain coincidences which take place between living individuals and which are to be explained in two general ways:

1. Chance. Coincidences, pure and simple.
2. Similarity of hereditary predisposition, or environmental influences, either or both of which tend to cause two individuals to think of the same thing,



approximately, at the same time and under similar circumstances.

In consideration of the fact that hereditary similarity may account for the apparent coincidence of two individuals in different parts of the world thinking of the same thing at the same time, we may cite the many experiences recorded of identity of thought on the part of so-called "identical twins."

*The Universal Mind.* This plausible hypothesis of a Universal Mind completely does away with the assumption of the transfer of thought from one finite mind to another. There may be a Universal Intelligence whose emanations radiate to all who are in harmony with the Divine Mind. Every soul who is "in tune with the Infinite" would enjoy the possibility of receiving messages and inspirations from this Central Source. If this is true, it is not difficult to see that two minds may have the same thought at the same time just as two wireless telegraph stations which are attuned alike may receive, at the same time, the same message, which has been flashed from a vessel out at sea many miles from each station. Many good people adhere to this view and derive comfort therefrom. Their own intimate experiences, they affirm, supply testimony in its favor.

Even the American Indian had in his religion, the "Great Spirit." All modern religions recognize the presence of a universal spirit. It is a cardinal thought

of Christianity that God should pour out His "Spirit upon all flesh." Jesus told His followers before His death — before He departed, that He would send them the "Comforter," the "Holy Ghost," who would teach and guide them "into all truth."

I am not disposed to follow the deceptive and illogical reasoning of the telepathist in order to find an explanation of these common experiences of thought harmony and identity. We are rather disposed to accept the equivalent of the Christian doctrine of the omnipresent Spiritual Mind, the doctrine of the Great Spiritual Teacher, as a basis for some of the phenomena commonly described under the head of telepathy.

If such phenomena find their explanation either in the doctrine of the Universal Mind or in any other doctrine which assumes the activity of spiritual forces in their production, they, of course, lie outside the realm of physical science and in that of personal religious belief; they are problems in spiritual science.

*Mrs. Piper and Thought Transference.* By the time Mrs. Piper got into the spiritualistic game it was becoming rather dangerous for mediums to indulge in physical manifestations, and so Mrs. Piper stuck rather closely to the direct-voice mode of transmitting spirit messages, occasionally indulging in performances that bordered on the trance. Prof. James Hyslop, in his investigation of Mrs. Piper, was so impressed by the large number of coincidences — he was so influenced

by Mrs. Piper's shrewd guessing — that in a published report of his sittings with this medium he advanced the opinion, that no matter what his ideas might be about Mrs. Piper's ability to communicate with the dead, he was sure of her ability to communicate with the minds of the living. In one case it was claimed that Mrs. Piper was able to project a trans-Atlantic communication, getting a message from some living mind in England, and it was asserted that this particular message while started out from Great Britain in English was received in this country in Latin, and yet it was claimed that Mrs. Piper understood nothing of the Latin tongue.

Most of the investigators who studied Mrs. Piper, if they believed at all in telepathy, usually reached the conclusion that her seances were largely to be explained on that hypothesis. And so it seems that the theory of telepathy has become, in recent years, very convenient to the psychic researcher as a means of accounting for a vast sphere of psychic phenomena which, on the one hand, the investigators cannot prove to be fraudulent, and which, on the other hand, is not sufficiently evidential to establish its claim to supernatural or spirit origin.

I recently attended a mind reading performance in which I am satisfied that communications were carried to the medium by means of radio. She wore a form of hair dressing which extended high upon her head, and



I believe she had a radio antennae concealed within it, and her hair covered her ears in such a manner that I am convinced a small watch-case receiver could have been so concealed as to enable her to hear messages completely. This is the first time I have seen a medium carry on such an exhibition and at the same time move about the stage.

And it should be borne in mind that most of these demonstrations are offered to the public as proofs of telepathy.

*Natural Law and Telepathy.* If telepathy is based on natural laws, then any person who would master these laws could practice telepathy. If telepathy were based on science, like telegraphy, and gramophony, anybody could do it. When radium was discovered by Curie, the description of the process of its detection was sufficient to enable any other chemist, having the same materials, to secure the same product. When Jenner published his discovery of vaccination, any other physician could perform the operation. When antitoxin was discovered, every intelligent physician was in a position to use it successfully. When telepathy is scientifically proved, then can any and all psychologists practise it. Natural laws are universal in their application.

#### 15. DREAMS AND SPIRITUALISM

Recently there appeared prominent mention in the

daily press of a case of a railroad builder who claimed to be under the control of spirits in the planning and executing of his engineering feats.

Mr. Stilwell said that nearly all his life he had made a secret of his powers, because he feared that people would think him a "nut." For years, however, some of his friends and many directors in companies associated with him, knew the source of his inspiration and believed in his spirits.

I am familiar with many cases like this. I know an inventor who dreams out most of his inventions. I am acquainted with an author who dreams out the plans for most of his books and the outlines of his chapters. I have a patient, a business man, who dreams out most of his financial deals — and they usually turn out well, too. I have myself dreamed out many a complicated problem, and the solution of the dream was very much better than the ones I had worked out during my waking moments. The fact that dreams may "come true," or that the conclusion reached in the dream state proves to be valuable or serviceable, in no way connects the dream life with supernatural forces or with discarnate spirits.

I want to make it clear to you that during sleep, the subconscious mind is in full commission, in fact is able to act much more freely, unhampered by the restraints and cautions of the higher powers of reason, judgment, and logic; although it must not be inferred that the

subconscious mind does not reason — it does reason — but it reasons largely by deduction, not so much by induction.

We commonly meet with those individuals who dream much concerning their work, and they secure many valuable suggestions from their dreams — though they are the exception, not the rule. The average engineer who builds railroads by his dreams, or by the guidance of “spooks,” will make a sorry mess of the whole undertaking; but there are exceptions, many of which I have investigated and studied. But it is not necessary to fall into the arms of spiritualism in order to understand, explain, or account for these interesting and unusual occurrences.

Many individuals secure from their dreams suggestions just as they would if they reclined in a hammock, out on a mountain side on a summer's afternoon, and allowed the phantasy to run riot in the mind, and as they indulged in day reveries, permitted the marginal consciousness to push far up into the central consciousness, and thus by reflection and meditation many new ideas will come trooping into the conscious mind. And this is true, whether the meditations be of the religious sort, indulged in by the religious thinker, or whether they be of the mechanical sort, indulged in by an engineer.

*An Experience of My Own.* I had a friend, a physician, who died a dozen years ago. We were very inti-



mate, and two or three years back, I well remember very vividly dreaming one night of his coming to me and discussing quite minutely a certain article which I had in preparation, or which I contemplated preparing. The suggestions he gave me, or the ideas I gathered from our dream conversation, were very interesting, and on waking up I jotted them down, feeling that I really had received a valuable "hunch." In fact I wrote the article along this line, and it proved to be something out of the ordinary. Now it would have been very easy for me to have utilized this as a demonstration of the return of the spirit, of spirit control, and of help from the spirit land, would it not? Indeed, but for two reasons:

1. I am not disposed to grab for spiritistic explanations for ordinary physical and psychic phenomena, and
2. After the article was published, in one of those periodical housecleanings that occur when one goes through the memoranda that accumulate in the desk drawers — I subsequently found the outline for this article which had been prepared by me and forgotten, and I found that I had outlined it almost exactly as my departed medical friend discussed it with me in my dream, and yet I can say I had truly and wholly forgotten ever having prepared these memoranda. I had written them down while traveling on a train one afternoon, en route to Chicago, and mislaid it and had forgotten all about it.

The psychology of my experience is simply this: the thing which I had thought out in a day reverie came up again with certain modifications in a night reverie, and this night reverie happened to collide and become confused with the dream vision concerning my departed friend, and what was more natural than that he and I should talk over this, as we had talked over many similar things in life. And yet how easy, without analysis, it would be to proclaim my article, which was one of the most unique I probably ever prepared, as having been indited by supernatural forces and having been transmitted to me by the spirit of my dead colleague.

And so one remarkable experience after another, as related by numerous individuals, vanishes into thin air, when accurately analyzed. And yet I am frank to say that it would be very difficult for me to explain this experience as I do, had I not subsequently found the forgotten memoranda containing the outline for my literary effort, as I had prepared it several years before. But such an experience helps us to understand some others which we are not in a position to analyze in the fortunate manner of this particular experience of mine.

#### 16. TRANCES AND CATALEPSY

It is not uncommon for persons in a cataleptic trance to imagine themselves taking trips to other worlds. In fact, the wonderful accounts of their experiences, which they write out after these cataleptic attacks are over,

are so unique and marvellous as to serve the basis for founding new sects, cults, and religions. Many strange and unique religious movements have thus been founded and built up. It is an interesting study in psychology to note that these trance mediums always see visions in harmony with their own theological beliefs. For instance, a medium who believed in the natural immortality of the soul, was always led around on her celestial travels by some of her dead and departed friends. One day she changed her religious views — became a “soul sleeper,” and ever after that, when having trances, she was piloted about from world to world on her numerous heavenly trips by the angels; no dead or departed friends ever made their appearance in any of her visions after this change in her belief.

Nearly all these victims of trances and nervous catalepsy, sooner or later come to believe themselves to be messengers of God and prophets of Heaven; and no doubt most of them are sincere in their belief. Not understanding the physiology and psychology of their afflictions, they sincerely come to look upon their peculiar mental experiences as something supernatural, while their followers blindly believe anything they teach because of the supposed divine character of these so-called revelations.

As far as my actual experience goes, as far as I have personally been able to test and observe those who have trances, visions, and other seizures or experiences of



this sort, I have not yet contacted with a case in which I could not, after a thorough-going psychologic research and painstaking physical examinations, determine fully — at least to my own satisfaction — those various psychic, chemical and physical influences which quite fully accounted for their unusual and extraordinary behavior.

Another most interesting phenomenon I have noticed in connection with trance mediums, who, as previously remarked, are in the majority of cases women, is that these trance or cataleptic phenomena which in some respects are very similar to attacks of major hysteria — only carried out still further — I say, it has been my experience that they usually make their appearance after adolescence has been established, and in no case which I have observed, or of which I have known, have these phenomena ever survived the appearance of the menopause. The character of the phenomena associated with these female prophets or trance mediums is always modified by the appearance of the “change of life.”

#### 17. HYPNOTISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

From our study of hypnotized subjects and trance mediums we conclude that the subconscious mind would be able to pass a very satisfactory Binet Simon test, and in many cases to take a stiff civil service examination. If a subconscious mind—a marginal con-

sciousness, or whatever other name it may be called — holds its memory material in such an organized form as to manifest such a high degree of intelligence — it should not be difficult for us to conceive of such a realm of the mind as being wholly capable of the creation and perpetration of the psychic frauds which characterize modern spiritualism. We must accept it as true — an established fact — that the subconscious mind of man constitutes a practical, functioning system, which embraces a creative imagination, association of ideas, employing a high degree of subtle reasoning and keen judgment, together with an ability of discreet deception, that is positively uncanny.

The subconscious may become responsible for our spells of periodic depression, our temperamental moods, hysterical catalepsy, trance states, somnambulistic wanderings, as well as the unique phenomena of secondary personality. And to any power of mind so versatile as this, it requires not a great stretch of the imagination to understand how the subconscious may be the birthplace of the deceptive vagaries and the unique hallucinations of spirit mediumship, for this unconscious realm is richly endowed with all the memory and experience material of one's past life.

*The Unconscious Wish.* If dreams represent an effort on the part of the subconscious during sleep to experience wish-fulfillment, to project its wishes out into the conscious mind by means of the symbolisms of

the dream world, it may also be true that the mediumistic phenomena, in the form of visual and auditory hallucinations, spirit messages and spirit forms, may be but a representation of the same effort of the unconscious to gain expression — to eliminate its complexes — to experience wish-fulfillment.

When certain unstable types of human beings have long desired and intensely wished, in their minds, to communicate with the dead, when they have studied, thought and prayed over this problem; when they have faithfully attended seances and have allowed the longings of their souls to be focused and concentrated on the thought, the desire to draw the veil aside and communicate with the spirits beyond — I say, after all this preliminary psychic preparation, it is little wonder, then, that ultimately their day dreams and reveries should begin to flow in the channel of wish-fulfillment, and that the overflowing content of the subconscious should push itself up and out toward the attainment and realization of those visions and experiences which would in some measure gratify this intense longing of the soul.

Owing to the widespread prevalence of spiritistic teachings, there is a great tendency on the part of many people to confuse their inner experiences or “inner voice” with their beliefs about ghosts and apparitions, all the while forgetting how tricky the subconscious mind is in palming off on its owner the creatures of its



own creation. It is failure to recognize this fact that leads the insane and the near-insane to become victims of both hallucinations and delusions. It must be remembered that the average human mind cannot be trusted to tell exactly, precisely, and truthfully what is going on in its own depths.

*Belief and Will.* In general, belief is but the conscious recognition or expression of an unconscious desire or wish. The dominant human wish is for self-glory, power and self-aggrandizement. All down through the ages, outside of the military hero and the sovereign of the realm, a "seer" was the most honored of all men. We look with reverence and awe upon the men and women who are supposed to be in touch with unseen power. We are inclined to worship those of our fellows who have been able to push aside the veil and peer into the realms of another world. In modern times the "medium" has become the successor of the ancient "seer."

The ordinary clergyman, it is true, reads his Bible and prays, and then orates his message from the pulpit; but the medium leans over the threshold of another world, and there — so he claims — actually hears the voices and sees the forms of spirit beings, angelic hosts and departed humans. The medium today is worshiped as a hero, adored as a "seer" by the faithful believers in spiritualism — until of course such time as the grand exposure results, the fraud is made manifest, the de-

ception is disclosed, and even then many of the faithful are slow to abandon their belief in the spiritual powers of their chosen medium.

#### 18. TAPPING THE SUBCONSCIOUS

It has been scientifically demonstrated that the subconscious mind can hold, formulate, and subsequently give forth for expression, ideas, images, emotions, and associations of ideas, which have never been consciously recognized or entertained for one instant — even in the fringe of the personal consciousness. Never have these things been brought to the attention of the individual, so that in their subsequent upbringing from the subconscious depths they are recognized as things wholly foreign to that very mind which has just given them birth. That this is true is conclusively shown in the case of the study of Mrs. Holland who, by automatic writing and in hypnosis, described things transpiring in her environment of which she was wholly unaware at the time.

In experiments of this sort I have been able to have subjects recall things which had been read in newspapers, but without sufficient attention being paid to them to enable the consciousness to be aware of the fact, and to trace out in the very depths of the subconscious mind experiences long since forgotten and which were produced as new creations in automatic writing, trance speaking, etc.

And so we come to see that the subconscious mind is a dangerous thing to tamper with. It is a risky thing to dip into too much. If you dip in repeatedly you are likely to become "dippy."

*Exploring the Subconscious by Hypnotism.* Experimentally, by means of hypnosis and by the procedure of psychoanalysis, we are able as will be seen, to take these mystics, psychics, clairvoyants, and mediums, and after they have given us a beautiful spirit seance and have transmitted to us messages from their spirit guides and controls — after we have had most wonderful and touching converse with our dear and departed dead — then we are able to take these unstable, hysteric, and unique individuals in hand, and by scientific processes and psychologic procedure show, first to ourselves and subsequently to those mediums themselves — if they are sincere — that all this stuff, the whole sordid mess, had a purely human and wholly natural origin in the depths of their own subconscious minds.

*Psychoanalysis.* Many years ago I became greatly interested in psychoanalysis and its possibilities in the study and treatment of nervous disorders, but I had not gone far in the employment of this method when, as the result of an experience that came to me through the study of a spirit medium, I saw I had accidentally stumbled upon what to me seemed the most valuable tool I had as yet discovered for scientifically investi-



gating and intelligently explaining the more subtle phases and phenomena of spiritualism.

Suffice it to say, in this connection, that psychoanalysis enables us, without putting the patient into hypnotic sleep, systematically to explore the superficial strata of the subconscious mind. In this way we have been able to show, again and again, that practically all of these things which mediums bring forth as communications from departed spirits have been palmed off on their conscious consciousness by their own unconscious, or subconscious selves.

In the case of the sincere spiritualist today, I am able to sit down and look him straight in the eye as I listen to his enthusiastic recital of the marvelous phenomena associated with his favorite medium, while I say: "It is all very interesting, but has it ever occurred to you that I have in my own mind another, and what seems to me to be a much more reasonable explanation for what you are telling me? And furthermore, if your medium is sincere and you will bring him to me, and he will honestly and fairly submit to the tests that we can put him through, we will first prove to you that his physical manifestations and phenomena are materialistic and fraudulent; and, second, that his psychic phenomena — his messages from the dead — take origin in the subconscious depths of his own unconscious mind." By means of either or both hypnotism and psychoanalysis, and perhaps in certain cases by

means of automatic writing, if these mediums are sincere, this can usually be demonstrated.

Mediums should be warned against submitting to psychoanalysis of a thorough-going sort, if they want still to persist in the practice of their profession as a means of gaining a livelihood, for all those of any honor will be forced to abandon their career and seek new economic paths as a means of making a living, because any experienced psychoanalyst will shortly convince them of the autopsychic origin of their so-called spirit communications.

Within the past year I have had not less than five cases of clairvoyants and mediums who have, after they had been but superficially studied and analyzed, abandoned belief in the supernatural origin of their voices and visions, and who are rapidly getting themselves under control and bringing their minds into safe and normal channels.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM

**S**PIRITUALISM has made great claims, but it has failed to make good. It has contributed mighty little to the advancement of education, morals, ethics, invention, religion, or any other of the arts or sciences of modern civilization.

If the spirits are so wise, why have they never whispered the principles of some new and great invention to the mediums? Why is it that our mechanical inventions all originate in the brains of our natural-born geniuses, or are worked out in the persistent sweat of such men as Thomas A. Edison? What a time and labor saving it would be if the secrets of the wireless-telegraph, or the principles of an internal combustion gas engine, could be secured at a spiritualistic seance. Why is it that these discarnate spirits and spirit beings of invisible space, if they are so interested in human kind, do not whisper to the mediums the cure for cancer, the remedy for infantile paralysis, or the most successful method of treating pneumonia? Why do not these all-wise, omnipresent spirits that hover about our earthly forms, take a greater interest in things that



are worth while? Why do they spend so much time telling us where to find lost jack-knives, and other useless trinkets? Why do they waste so much energy in telling us the date on an ancient coin, or the foolish thoughts that went through our heads at some given moment, when there is so much that is worth while that needs to be done on this planet and for its inhabitants? An intelligent visitor cannot go to an average spiritualistic seance, without leaving with the impression that the entities of the spirit land are either infantile, or pure and simple "boobs," when, after all their laborious effort to contact with the living, they indulge in such puerile and juvenile communications.

#### 1. HUMBUGGERY ILLUSTRATED

In my pilgrimages out on the frontiers of science and spiritism, I have had many amusing experiences; experiences which illustrate the fact that neither the mediums nor their alleged spirit controls know the real facts concerning the topic of their discussion. One of the best illustrations I have had of this, and one that has been repeated many times in my experience, is one that occurred some years ago in London. I had been taken, by medical friends, to consult with the then-reigning medium, the one who at that time was in vogue. She started the seance, in my case, with the statement that she observed that I was more or less of a skeptic regarding spiritualism and the ability of

mediums to converse with spirits beyond the vale. This skepticism I of course acknowledged, and she proceeded immediately to get down to business and pass under the influence of her controls, her spirit guides, etc. She soon said that there were a number of my acquaintances and departed relatives who were present and would like to communicate with me. I inquired as to their identity, and she seemed a little hesitant at first, but proceeded in a rather indefinite manner to say that she thought grandfather was present, a cousin, and then after a moment of hesitation, a departed brother. "You have a dead brother, have you not?" she asked me, and while I did not reply "Yes," I said to her: "Well, of those you have named, I should be most interested in holding converse with the dead brother you have mentioned." There then ensued a half hour's communication with my alleged departed brother. It was very interesting, and I am free to confess that it would be very difficult to explain fully and completely on purely psychological grounds and the subconscious hypothesis. I have no reason to believe that this medium had any knowledge of my identity, or knew anything of my past history, but this dead brother of mine certainly did hold a very interesting conversation with me, and while there was more or less of that vagueness and ambiguity that characterizes mediums, especially when they undertake to prognosticate the future, nevertheless this departed

brother did show some familiarity with my past history — not very definite, it is true — but still he made a brave stagger at trying to convince me that he knew me as I had been, and that therefore I should recognize him as he was.

Finally, the seance was concluded, and the spirit departed from our presence, and then this medium asked me what I thought of the performance. I told her I thought it was very interesting. She said, “Now you are convinced of the reality of spirit manifestations?” I told her no, I was not, and she said, “How can you go through such an experience as you have just had without admitting the reality of spiritual manifestations?” And then she was greatly perturbed and considerably angered when I confessed to her that I had never had a brother, living or dead, and that however unique or entertaining the visitation might have been, she had been imposed upon by the spirits, and deceived, and that the spirit who was conversing with me, no matter what his source and origin, was an undoubted prevaricator, as he had endeavored to palm himself off on both of us as the spirit of my departed brother — that I was the oldest member of the family, and that there were no other children except twin sisters, one living and one dead. This technical point I had taken pains to make clear by directly asking him, early in the interview, if he was the spirit of my brother and not the spirit of my sister, and he explained that



he was the discarnate spirit of a brother, not the sister.

## 2. DEGREES OF FRAUD AND DECEPTION

The successive exposure of fraud after fraud on the part of mediums seems only to develop their sagacity and sharpen their wits. One medium tells us how another who is so fortunate as to have a chemist for a husband has, by his help, developed some sort of a capsule which can be moistened in her mouth and thrown up into the air in the seance room where, in the midst of total darkness, it will evolve into a luminous vapor about the size of the human form and can be wafted about the room by initiating a gentle breeze by means of a fan or otherwise. It is said that there is no odor connected with this phenomenon, that if the lights are turned on nothing will be seen, but that on turning out the lights the mystic form will again appear.

It should be noted in this connection that fashion — the vogue — has a great deal to do with spiritualistic performances. In one period we had rapping on tables, in another slate writing, in another materializations, to be followed by magnetic powers, spirit photography, Indian guides, and so on. Particularly, it has been found that fashions come and go in regard to controls and guides. How much has been done in the name of Katie King, John King, Red Jacket, and so on. We have the record of serious quarrels and vio-

lent disputes between mediums over the right to have certain individuals for their alleged controls, one medium contending that another has no right to such a control, etc. These things have gotten into the newspapers, and have even resulted in personal violence.

After all, the quality of the communications from alleged spirits is enough to betray the whole movement. When Sir Oliver Lodge gets Sir Isaac Newton on the wireless telephone it is interesting to note that we do not get any advanced information on gravitation or the latest developments of the Einstein theory. Sir Oliver is not able to get any help as a result of the progress which Sir Isaac has been able to make on the other side. Sir Isaac merely tells Sir Oliver that he is glad he is studying spiritualism, that he is very happy on the other side, and bids him farewell.

When Hodgson communicates with Sir Oliver, through Mrs. Piper, he is not able to give any information on the cipher code which he left behind — he is not able to give any information regarding psychic research which will help Sir Oliver — he merely says: “Hello! I am so happy; all’s well, good-bye.”

I have never known a future event to be unequivocally predicted, and then seen it happen as stated. I have known of many haphazard, ambiguous predictions, that could be twisted around so that they could be said to have come to pass, and this seems to be the habit of mediums. I remember the case of a patient on

whom I was to operate. His wife went to a medium and asked if her husband would survive the operation, and the medium replied, "Yes, if the right surgeon does it." This set the wife nearly wild, and she resorted to the ouija board to ascertain if I would be the right surgeon. But a thunder storm came up and so frightened this highly nervous woman that she gave up the ouija board, became hysterical, and had to go to the hospital herself. I am glad to record that the patient lived, but had he died, the medium would only have called attention to the nature of her advice and the responsibility would have rested upon the person who selected the wrong surgeon.

### 3. MORALITY AND HONESTY

A few years back there was published in German, a work on spiritualism by Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. This same book was published in French by Madame Bisson. This is a work containing about one hundred fifty photographs of materializations of their pet medium, Eva C., and regarding this lady's character and morals the baron admits that she has "moral sentiment only in the ego-centric sense," and if I understand that definition properly it is equivalent to saying that she has no moral sentiments at all. The baron further says that she "behaves improperly to herself," that she "lost her virtue before she was twenty," and further that she has a "lively erotic imagination," and "an



exaggerated idea of her own charms and her influence upon the male sex." Yet Sir Arthur and Sir Oliver hold up this medium and her performances as the latest manifestations of the spirits of another world in their efforts to communicate with this world.

Now this supposedly immaculate vestal virgin — this high priestess of the inner spiritualism — as we have previously shown, is none other than the notorious Marthe Braud, she of the Algiers frauds and numerous other unsavory experiences.

We must not forget that one of the Fox sisters, Margaret, who later married Captain Kane, the Arctic explorer — and who, as the result of his urging, made a clean breast of the whole spiritualistic movement in America — branded it as a gross fraud engineered for profit by her older sister, and declared further that the whole movement was "steeped in fraud and immorality."

Perhaps Sir A. C. Doyle would plead that this appalling outburst of fraud, which poured over America from 1848 to 1888, was only the occasion for the appearance of genuine mediums. Well, who are they? Take the mediums who founded Spiritualism in England from 1852 onward. Was Foster white? As early as 1863 the Spiritualistic Judge Edmonds, learned "sickening details of his criminality." Was Colchester, who was detected and exposed, white? What was the color of the Holmes family, whose darling spirit control,

“Katie King,” got so much jewelry from the poor old R. D. Owen before she was found out? Are we to see no spots on the egregious “Dr.” Monck, who pretended that he was taken from his bed in Bristol and put to bed in Swindon by spirit hands? Or in corpulent Mrs. Cuppy (an amateur who duped A. Russell Wallace for years), who swore that she had been snatched from her table in her home at Ball’s Pond, taken across London (and through several solid walls) for three miles at sixty miles an hour, and deposited on the table in a locked room? Was Charles Williams white? He was, with Rita, detected by Spiritualists at Amsterdam with a whole ghost-making apparatus in his possession. Were Bastian and Taylor white? They were similarly exposed at Arnheim. Was Florence Cook, the pupil of Herne (the transporter of Mrs. Cuppy at sixty miles an hour), and bewitcher of Sir W. Crookes, white? We shall soon see. Was her friend and contemporary ghost-producer, Miss Showers, never exposed? Or does Sir A. C. Doyle want us to believe in Morse, or Eglington, or Slade, or the Davenport brothers, or Mrs. Fay, or Miss Davenport, or Duguid, or Fowler, or Hudson, or Miss Wood, or Mme. Blavatsky?

And so the dismal story goes on: Munsterberg shows up Eusapia Palladino; they catch Craddock in London and he is fined in the police court; Frau Aband, the mediumistic marvel of Berlin and the idol of the Teutonic Spiritualists is exposed and arrested; Bailey, the

pride of the Australian Spiritualists — he of marvelous *rapport* fame — is unmasked and exposed; in France, Corrales, a short-lived mediumistic marvel is soon cast down in disgrace; Sardi, the chief of the Italian mediums comes to a sad end, and the following year Linda Gazerra, that refined Italian lady medium who held high carnival and duped the scientists for three years, comes to the same inglorious end; Mrs. Wreidt, the famous direct-voice medium, met her Waterloo in Norway. And so the list goes; mediums are short-lived; three to five years is about all that can be expected of them before they are detected in fraud and publicly exposed. Some clever ones have been able to operate a bit longer.

How long would the priesthood of any cult last — how long would the ministry of any denomination stand — if in three-quarters of a century it had been convicted of the fraud, immorality, and other unethical behavior that stigmatizes the priesthood of modern spiritualism? As one writer said, calling attention to Podmore's history of the spiritualistic movement: "There is hardly a medium named in the nineteenth century who does not eventually disappear in an odor of sulphur."

Carrington, who has been a great student of mediums, and who may be said to be a believer in spiritualism, was forced to admit that ninety-eight per cent of the physical phenomena of spiritualism was fraudulent.



## 4. THE TEST THAT ALWAYS FAILS

Again and again have I tried, through mediums, when supposedly in communication with some deceased scholar, to get the spirit to dictate to the medium something pertaining to the spirit's professional specialties when here on earth. For instance, I have a deceased friend, a physician and a very dear friend, and in my investigation of spiritism I have supposedly been many times in communication with this physician — but never have I been able to get the spirit to dictate some passage from some medical authority that I might suggest. Never could I get the medium to spell out medical terms properly, never could I get the medium to name the diagnosis we made of a certain case which we had in consultation or to cite the authorities investigated at that conference which led to the making of the diagnosis. In a score of ways I have given these mediums an opportunity to prove that they were in communication with bona fide discarnate spirits, but in every instance they have wholly and completely — yes dismally — failed.

I have talked with George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Paine, Socrates, Plato, Milton, and other of the great minds of past ages, but in no case have I ever secured from mediums anything from these old masters that would bear the least semblance to the product of their minds when living on earth — and mind you, I communicated with them with reference

to the very things they thought about and discussed when living. I did not ask questions pertaining to their present state in the spirit world. I did not ask for a description of the landscape and geography of spiritland. I asked them about the very things they authoritatively discussed when living, and they unfailingly defaulted in their efforts to show any degree of familiarity with those subjects in which they were specialists in life.

In this connection I should say that I have tested out mediums by going repeatedly to the same seance and asking to communicate with the same spirit, and thus I have observed a growth or development in the quality of the information imparted to me through the alleged spirit. For instance, in my first talk with the poet Milton, along theological lines, I got little or no satisfaction, but on going several times to the same medium I discovered that she had been reading *Paradise Lost*, so I began having lengthy conferences with the alleged spirit of the poet. But it was all too transparent — the medium had been posting up and the quantity and quality of my information was quite largely and evidently determined by the medium's progress in the study of the poet's writings.

Hodgson, Myers, and others have left sealed messages, written in cipher, and so far no medium has ever been able to interpret them, no one has ever approached an interpretation of these code messages. But some

fellow will be enthusiastic for the cause one of these days and will leave a message which has previously been given to some medium, in a spirit of enthusiasm, feeling that the end justifies the means, and they will score a big point for spiritualism. But so far that test has failed every time. But mark my words the time is coming when it will (apparently) succeed.

If we could call up the spirits of the departed, and they were really true to their professed identity, we might hear something worth while. As some one suggested not long since, it would be interesting to get Isaac Newton on the wire and hear what he thought of the Einstein theory of relativity. We would likewise be glad to hear from George Washington on the League of Nations; what Gladstone thought about the Irish Treaty; or from Abraham Lincoln on the Four-Power Naval Pact. It would be interesting to hear what Alexander the Great might have thought of the military strategy at Verdun. But, strange to say when the mediums do bring out these dignitaries and sages of a past age, they are much more likely to talk about substitutes for coffee, removable dental bridges, or to discuss some other trifle, the purport of which is to try and convince those present that spirits are real because they can tell you about something you have lost or which has been stolen, etc. The whole business is too trivial and juvenile to be worthy of the serious attention of sober-minded, thinking men and women.



There was a Jewish fellow who went to consult a medium, and she told him his mother was present. He talked with his mother's spirit, and she gave him messages from other relatives who had passed over, and at the end the medium asked if there were any other questions he would like to ask his mother, and he said: "You know, Mother, we used to have such nice visits in Hebrew, and now if I could just have a little talk with you in Yiddish, then I'd know it was you." But the ghost could not talk Yiddish.

#### 5. MEDIUMISTIC SPIRITUALITY

It does not appear that the mediums are the sources and centers of the highest spiritual thought of the realm. Ethical advancement and spiritual improvement do not seem to take their origin or have their root in spiritualism. The men and women who have contributed to the social improvement and moral advancement have not been avowed spiritualists. They have not secured their information from the discarnate spirits who inhabit the ether surrounding our planet, or who infest the atmosphere which we breathe and re-breathe.

The theological advancement of age after age has not been the result of spiritualistic influences. The ethical and social improvement of human society has come from those daring reformers and intrepid human minds who have essayed to go forth in times of darkness and

point out higher and better ways, by means of the light which shone forth from the truth which they proclaimed. The world has been advanced by men and women who loved light and worshipped truth, whose doings were open, and whose beliefs would stand the clear light and illumination of the severest tests which their fellow men might apply; whereas the mediums, at least in a material way, seem to love darkness more than light, and to keep their cause enshrouded in mysticism, while their comings in and goings out are steeped in secrecy and permeated with mystery.

#### 6. NATIONAL TENDENCIES

In our study of mediums and spiritualistic phenomena, it is very interesting to note that not only waves of fashion — epochs of characteristic behavior — have dominated spiritualism from decade to decade, but the further fact is observed that spiritualism is directed in its performance, and tends to crystallize its dogmas, differently among different peoples. There is a nationalistic tendency to spirit manifestations.

It seems that spiritualistic manifestations are liable to take on the current color of the time and place in which they take origin. It is easy to suppose that a writer might receive from his subconscious centers certain ideas which he believes to be of spiritistic origin, and since they would be quite likely to harmonize more or less with his theories of life in general, and his spir-

itualistic philosophy in particular, it is easy to imagine that his mind — thus aroused by these ebullitions of the subconscious — would continue to develop it. Now, suppose such an author has theosophical leanings. It is quite likely that the whole spiritualistic message will evolve into a theosophical dissertation. Such a spirit communication would have special influence with the devotees of the theosophical cult.

We observe that spiritualism in Germany, France, Great Britain and America, tends to run in entirely different channels. Spirits, apparently, are not in possession of a working program and a universal propaganda. Apparently, they are limited in communicating with the living to the beliefs, tendencies and other influences which are in vogue among the different peoples and nations through which they operate. All of which suggests the purely fallible nature and human origin of the whole phenomenon.

#### 7. THE BIBLICAL ESTIMATE OF SPIRITUALISM

It is certain that Moses, who, we are told, was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” was familiar with these occult doctrines, for he left on record for the guidance of the ancient Israelites, the following admonition: “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a necromancer.



For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deut. 18:10-12. He here catalogues eight different classes of occult devotees or spiritualistic mediums.

It must be evident from the foregoing biblical admonition that spiritualism, in the time of Moses, was not in good ethical and theologic standing. If the religious teachers of biblical times believed the mediums of their day were actually in communication with spirits, it is evident that they regarded them as highly disreputable, and looked upon their spirit controls as being of an evil nature. Consequently, we have, all through the scriptures, the denunciation of the practice of seeking information from the dead, with the constant exhortation that the appeal of mankind should be made to the living God.

The prophet Isaiah, in discussing spiritualism, says: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8: 19, 20. This then is the test. Divine law and the testimony of truth constitute the statutes whereby we should judge the teachings and estimate the performances of modern spiritualism, but how seldom are these spiritistic pretenders of today ever brought face to face with such

a tribunal. How seldom are they called upon to pass such tests. All too easily, the ignorant and uninstructed public of today are fascinated with their seances and deceived by their performances.

It must be clear to the reader that the Jews, as a nation, were taught from earliest infancy to have nothing to do with the whole group of mystic soothsayers, whether they secured their information from the stars, the astrologists; whether they got it from evil spirits, the witches; or whether they pretended to communicate with the dead, those having familiar spirits. It is clear that Moses and his successors taught the Jews to keep away from the whole nefarious tribe.

It is an important part of the history of spiritualism to note how it was so utterly condemned by Jewish philosophy, and outlawed by Judaistic theology; and it is even a commentary on the wisdom of Moses that he should, three thousand years ago, and in the absence of all the psychologic and scientific aid which we have at our hand today, diagnose and seek to restrict the occultism of his day as shown by the prohibitions heretofore quoted — it is also a sad commentary on the intelligence and reasoning power of the men and women who live in this supposedly intellectual age, with all the means and methods we have for detecting occult fraud and exposing spiritualistic deceptions, that such large numbers should look with such a high degree of favor upon the spiritualistic pretenses of our modern

adventurers, wizards and necromancers.

In ancient times they also had fraudulent priests. In the apocryphal book *Bel and the Dragon*, we are told how Daniel revealed to Cyrus, the King of Babylon, a trick by which the court priests were fooling him, inducing him to provide each evening a great quantity of choicest provisions for the great god Bel to eat, but which they and their families ate. By the neat device of a thin layer of ashes sprinkled on the floor of the temple and on the altar steps, Daniel was able to reveal the footprints of the tricky priests and the secret door under the altar by which they entered the temple after it "was shut and sealed with the king's signet." Daniel was a good psychic researcher. We need more of his sort today.

#### 8. THE WITCH OF ENDOR

One of the most significant passages in all the sacred literature, with which I am familiar, is that depicting the experience of the Hebrew King, Saul, with the Witch of Endor, and found in I Sam. 28:5-16.

A perusal of this passage of scripture shows, very clearly, a number of things:

1. That they had professional mediums in Saul's day, just as we have them today and that these professional mediums claimed to be able to call up the dead and to put living persons in communication with discarnate spirits.



2. That official decrees had been issued against these ancient mediums, in harmony with the Mosaic injunction, much as we are wont, every now and then, to issue police orders against the operation of clairvoyants, fortune tellers and mediums, in our own day; and that at this particular time when Saul felt lonely and God-forsaken, there had been recent police activities of a very vigorous nature against all this psychic, occult business, throughout the Hebrew kingdom.

3. That after much persuasion, and after being solemnly promised that she should not be arrested or molested, this old woman of Endor consented to call the spirits, and at her petitioner's request brought up the alleged spirit of Samuel. And as is often the case, enough of plausible or worthy advice is given to serve both to establish the identity of the spirit and create confidence on the part of those who seek information from these sources. It is further suggested that the spirit, in this case at least, operating through the witch of Endor, knew and recognized Saul when the old lady herself was apparently quite ignorant of his identity; this fact tending of course to give the whole proceeding a tinge of the supernatural of some sort; though of course we have here only a very brief and fragmentary record of a very important and extraordinary seance.

4. The whole thing contained quite a rebuke for Saul, in that even the alleged spirit of Samuel pointed

out the folly, if he could not get help and succor from the living, acting Spiritual Forces of the realm — if his living God could not help him out of the fix he was in — of appealing to the dead for guidance and wisdom.

The folly of this transaction on the part of King Saul is further shown by a terse statement found in I Chronicles 10:13, 14. “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it: and inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”

According to the sacred record, the Almighty was much displeased with Saul because he sought counsel from a spiritualistic medium. We would infer that he only went to this source of help because he was out of touch and out of tune with the higher and Divine source of help and guidance, and the subsequent sad spectacle of his dying a suicide on the hills of Gilboa after the violation of his own royal decree and the Jewish code of ethics in going to seek information from the dead, is but in keeping with the last results we have observed in modern times, of many who seek comfort and guidance at the broken cisterns of spiritism. I know of a number of instances where individuals, like Saul, after seeking advice from mediums and clairvoyants, have likewise filled the grave of a miserable suicide.

## 9. CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITUALISM

Gibbon, in his famous fifteenth chapter, marks as one of the five causes of the growth of Christianity, "the doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth;" and in the true spirit of the eighteenth century, he goes on to remark that "it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer (eternal happiness) should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman Empire." The historian is right when he thus sees in Christianity the religion of immortality, though he fails to throw light on the curious phenomenon that a truth which, on his own admission has been for centuries in possession of the greater portion of civilized men, had proved of small account, yet in the new religion swept over the Graeco-Roman world and eventually transformed it.

But an equally important question is raised when the sociological effect of this theory is contemplated. Convince men generally that consciousness ends in the grave, deprive them of that optimism that lies hidden in the heart, however it may be derided by the tongue, and what right have you to expect enterprise, adventure, the courage of the pioneer, the forward movement of the forces that make for progress and civilization? It was Renan who said that it would be a fatal day for any nation when it gave up belief in immor-



tality. His shrewd eye saw that behind disbelief in a life beyond lay disbelief in the value of personality. Look at Germany, where, among the educated classes, faith in immortality has been scorned as one of the main buttresses of superstition, and where dogmatic materialism in the person of Professor Haeckel still plants its banner.

Again, the idea of Christ's mission being that of a life-giver, and that this life pertains to something unusual and out of the ordinary, is further carried out by the statement of John 10:10, "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses he further carries out this same idea: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

John, it would seem, designed to teach that immortality was conditional upon Christian belief; that the theology of it consisted in the recognition of everlasting life as a gift made possible by the sacrificial mission of Christ in the rôle of the world's Redeemer. This seems also to be the purport of the statement of the first epistle of John, 5:11-13: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is

in His Son. These things I have written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God.” And the apostle Paul seems to have carried out the same teaching in his philosophy, where he says, in Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

#### 10. MODERN THEOLOGICAL VIEWS

The theological views respecting spiritualism may be divided into several groups:

a. *The orthodox viewpoint.* The orthodox Christian religions frankly believe and teach the immortality of the soul, and in the absence of any direct instruction as pertains to spiritualistic practices, leave the door wide open for their communicants to dabble with spiritism and indulge in experimental efforts to communicate with the dead.

b. *The Oriental viewpoint.* Both the Judaistic and the Hindu doctrines do not offer much encouragement to spiritualism. The Old Testament scriptures of the Jews seem to teach that there is little hope of communicating with those who have once entered the portals of the tomb.

c. *The Soul Sleepers.* The Seventh Day Adventists and some other sects are inclined to view the status of the dead much in accordance with the teachings of the

old Hebrew scriptures, believing that mortals who have closed their eyes in death do not return to this planet, that their records are preserved on high, and that they will be duly resurrected at a future Day of Judgment, there to appear before the Magistrate of all the Universe, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and that subsequent to this judgment the righteous enter the Gates of Paradise while the unworthy are condemned to the nether regions.

d. *The Catholic View.* It seems to be the disposition on the part of many Catholic authorities and publications to admit the possible genuineness of some spiritual communications, but at the same time to forbid all efforts to communicate with these supernatural intelligences. To dabble with spiritualism is regarded as a wicked practice. It seems to have been officially decreed by the Sacred Roman Congregation that "As matters stand, it is not allowable."

e. *The Spiritualistic Viewpoint.* To the spiritualist, Christ is the Master Medium. All of the Oriental mysticism of Holy Writ, and all references to the "Mediator," the "Holy Ghost," and what not, are supposed to be allusions to the power of mediumship, with its ability to bridge the gulf between the seen and the unseen worlds.

To the spiritualist, the resurrection of Christ was a master materialization, a perfect type of the ability of the spirit to materialize itself so that it can be seen,



heard, and handled by other living and material beings. Likewise every allusion of the Bible to "ministering angels," every reference to "demons and devils," is assumed to constitute a scriptural backing for the present-day belief in the dogmas of spiritualism. One spiritualist has said: "Take out of the Bible all reference to spirits and angels, and the remainder will be only a mass of fables."

As we have seen, while spiritualism is not a new doctrine — it is as old as the human race — yet spiritualism as an affiliation with the Christian religion is a comparatively new and recent phenomenon. Only in the last two generations have mediums — those who profess to communicate with the spirits of the dead — claimed to base their teachings and to justify their practices by an appeal to the scriptures of the Christian religion.

f. *The Hypothesis of the Universal Mind.* Many sober-minded philosophers of today who are quite averse to accepting the tenets of spiritualism — the doctrine of the dead communicating with the living — are disposed to believe in the existence of a Universal Spiritual Mind with which the Spiritual Monitors of men may possibly be able to communicate when they are properly attuned.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

THE believers in spiritualism are wont to point with pride to certain scientific men whom they claim as converts; but careful investigation proves that many of these men do not confirm these claims but instead most strenuously maintain that they are not spiritualists. For example, Flammarion, whom the spiritualists have claimed as a convert, says, in a book published as far back as 1907, that he is not and never was a spiritualist. In this connection he publishes a letter from Schiaparelli, whom the spiritualists have also claimed, disavowing his belief in all such phenomena. Even Professor Richet, although he has admitted belief in some sorts of materialization, is not a spiritualist, as ordinarily understood. Professor MorSELLI, who has been heralded by the spiritualists as a believer in the cult, has characterized the interpretation of their phenomena as "childish, absurd, and immoral."

On the other hand, it should be stated that some men entitled to at least some claim of scientific eminence, have admitted that they have been puzzled by certain spiritualistic phenomena, such as raps and other

minor manifestations. Some have been inclined to believe that there might be something abnormal, if not supernatural, about certain spiritualistic manifestations; among this group we might mention Richet, Flornoy, Carrington, and Maxwell. But it should be stated that the majority of the scientists who are disposed to believe some of the phenomena produced by mediums, do not for a moment attribute these performances to spirit agencies. They merely think that they have excluded all possible fraud, and while they do not admit the hypothesis of these phenomena being executed by discarnate spirits, they are left in the perplexed attitude of finding an alternative explanation or hypothesis to account for the medium's performance.

#### 1. PROFESSOR WILLIAM CROOKES AND OTHERS

Spiritualists have made much of the investigations, by Professor Crookes, of that pretty little Hackney girl, Florence Cook, who early became one of the renowned mediums of England, at least for a while. Crookes was a young scientist, and at the time Florrie materialized at his house he wrote two or three letters telling of the wonderful things which he saw. It should be said that he did not re-publish these letters later in life, and that later on he all but gave up his confidence in the whole spiritualistic movement.

While Florrie Cook, the medium, was supposed to be lying on the floor in an improvised cabinet, a beau-



tiful and romantic maiden, the alleged Katie King, walked about the room and told his children of her life in India long, long ago. She even took the Professor's arm on one occasion and walked across the floor with him, and from his brief letters it is very evident that Katie King was more than an ethereal apparition. She must have been a very solid sort of human being, because the Professor tells of feeling her pulse and auscultating her heart, and even went so far as to cut off one of her auburn curls — a liberty which the spiritualists will not allow us with the famed ectoplasm of more recent materializations, averring that to sever the ectoplasm would mean the death of the medium. In one of his letters, the Professor breaks off abruptly in describing a spiritistic flirtation up to this point, and merely asks what any man would do under the circumstances — leaving us of course to infer that the average human would probably discover that the maiden had warm breath like any other individual who had been so materialistic up to that point.

It is interesting to note, in the case of Professor Hyslop, who did so much in connection with Dr. Hodgson to initiate psychic investigation in the United States, that while he was a logical thinker — in fact at one time Professor of Logic at Columbia University — he did not take up the investigation of spirit phenomena until prolonged ill-health compelled him to resign his professorship at the University. And it is well known

that Professor Hyslop's belief that he had been able to communicate with his associate and co-worker, Dr. Hodgson, was all based upon the writing phenomenon of Mrs. Piper, the Boston medium, while in a state of trance or catalepsy.

Some good has been done by the psychic researchers, at any rate, in that they have exposed many of the more palpable medium frauds, such as Mme. Blavatsky, and others.

And so the story might be continued, reciting how the great and the near-great have, from time to time, dabbled in spiritualism, and undertaken to investigate its numerous phenomena. But the reader will observe that there is indeed a paucity of real scientists who have ever become serious-minded converts to spiritualism; and even in the case of those who have espoused the cause, practically none of them — except in the case of William Crookes — was ever known to believe in its tenets in his younger years. Most of the so-called great men who have espoused spiritualism have done so subsequent to, or about the time of reaching that psychically susceptible age of "three score years and ten." This is indeed unfortunate, for this whole subject, as regards its physical manifestations, spirit photography, etc., would have been long since largely cleared up had more men of scientific ability turned their attention to its investigation earlier in life.

## 2. SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Sir Arthur seems to possess anything but the scientific attitude — the analytical mind — that is required properly to investigate the phenomena of spiritualism. His judgment seems to be precipitate, his discrimination defective — not to say anything in question of his discretion. The childlike credulity with which he accepts phenomena as evidential, in support of spiritism, is pathetic, as evidenced by the haste with which he sent to the *London Daily Mail* on December 16, 1919, a photograph of an alleged picture of Christ, which he said had been “done” in but a few hours by a lady who had had no previous artistic training or experience in portrait painting. Doyle thought the picture “a masterpiece,” contending that it was such a wonderful painting that “a great painter in Paris (whose name unfortunately was withheld) fell instantly upon his knees” in breathless admiration before such a marvelous production. Doyle thought this painting was “a supreme example” of a spiritualistic miracle. Now, the sequel of this hasty act on the part of Sir Arthur is disclosed in a letter written on December 31, by the artist’s husband to the *Daily Mail*, from which it will suffice to quote a single paragraph: “Mrs. Spencer wishes definitely to state, once and for all, that her pictures are painted in a perfectly normal manner, that she is disgusted at having ‘psychic power’ attributed to her, and that she does not cherish any ludicrous or



mawkish sentiments about helping humanity by her painting.”

It seems that Sir Arthur is given to being over-impressed by spiritualistic seances and that he is given to over-exaggeration. A number of these indiscretions are noted by McCabe in the following indictment: “He said that Eusapia Palladino was quite honest in the first fifteen years of her mediumship; that he had given me the names of forty spiritualist professors; that the Fox sisters were at first honest; that I did not give the evidence from his books correctly; that Mr. Lethem got certain detailed information the first time he consulted a medium; that in Mme. Bisson’s book you can see ectoplasm pouring from the medium’s ‘nose, eyes, ears, and skin;’ that Florrie Cook ‘never took one penny of money;’ that in the Belfast experiment the table rose to the ceiling, and so on. His frame of mind was extraordinary.”

From a theological standpoint it is necessary to recognize that Doyle repudiates all belief in the sacrificial, or atoning significance of Christ’s life and death, as in fact do most of the out-and-out believers in modern spiritualism. It has seemed to me very inconsistent for the spiritualists to quibble with believing in the miracles of Biblical record when they are so willing to accept, with child-like and open-mouthed credulity as miracles, those performances which the most superficial investigation discloses to be wholly or partially

fraudulent. In the case of Doyle, I am almost led to believe that he has reached that time of life when his wonderful gift for creating fictitious characters has become hooked up in his brain with his will to believe in spirits, and that the "feeling of reality" has become projected outward from his subconscious centers onto these spiritistic brain children to such an extent that he has come actually to believe in the reality of the fictitious creations of his own mind. How else can we reconcile the statements and conduct of such a cultured gentleman, on the one hand, with the child-like credulity and willingness to be deceived by such commonplace phenomena?

### 3. SIR OLIVER LODGE

Sir Oliver Lodge is the one great surprise of present-day spiritualism. The varying degrees to which most of the men who are entitled to be called scientists have dabbled in spiritism can be more or less understood, and we can understand how the novelist, Doyle, in spite of his medical training, could become enamored of its tenets and phenomena. But Lodge is more or less of a conundrum, though it must be remembered that he is very chary in his statements as to just how far he accepts or endorses any given spiritistic manifestation or phenomenon. It must be remembered that, in bringing out his book *Raymond*, purporting to be a record of more or less indirect communication with his

deceased son, he is very careful not to guarantee the narrative. Sir Oliver has a unique way — one quite his own — of throwing his personal influence almost unreservedly in the scale of modern spiritualism, with all that the name implies, while at the same time he preserves the form of that scientific reserve — that noncommittal attitude — which is supposed to characterize the scientist, when it comes to the acceptance or endorsement of a specific bit of spiritualistic propaganda. His attitude, as I see it, seems to be something like this: I accept the fundamental doctrines of spiritualism; I even believe in most of its mediumistic manifestations; but I must not be held strictly to account, or responsible for, any specific phenomena.

In presenting this book, *Raymond*, to the public, Sir Oliver hedges considerably. He believes that he has been in communication with his son, but in all probability he dislikes to become personally responsible for all the puerile twaddle that the mediums produced in the name of his son. In fact, when we carefully study his introduction to this narrative, we sometimes wonder whether he intended the book to be taken seriously by the public, as it evidently has been by spiritualists and thousands of others.

It seems that Raymond, Sir Oliver's son, was not able directly to get in touch with an individual whom he could use as a direct voice medium, as Sir A. C. Doyle's son is supposed to have done, in communica-



ting with his father. In fact, it would appear that Raymond was not able directly to communicate through Mrs. Leonard, his medium. It seems that he was compelled, by the situation in the spirit world, or by circumstances in this mundane sphere, to employ a secondary—or, what might be called an intermediary—spirit, the spirit of a child named Feda, and in this way it is alleged that he was able to communicate through the medium, Mrs. Leonard, with his father.

#### 4. SUMMER LAND AND ITS CITIZENS

Sir Oliver Lodge, or rather Raymond, tells us that the abode of spirits is known locally to him as “Summer Land,” and he tells us that the young rapidly reach maturity, and that the old go back to a more or less adult, or middle age state. Now this seems hard to reconcile with Sir Arthur’s teaching, as I heard him proclaim, when on his lecture tour on this side of the Atlantic, that the bereaved mothers would see their blue-eyed, golden haired children just as they were when they departed this life, and would be able to recognize them as they clasped them in their arms. But spiritualists are used to meeting minor difficulties like this, and to explaining away trifling inconsistencies of this sort. It doesn’t seem to hurt the movement — it goes serenely on.

I have recently tried to harmonize these inconsistencies when in communication with some of the great

scientists of spirit land, but instead of getting help I have only been led into confusion worse confounded, because they variously tell entirely different stories. But a short time back the great Darwin assured me (at least the medium communicated the information to me) that "there is nothing material in spirit land except the condensation, or crystallization, of the good thoughts and good deeds of departed mortals." If I were dependent on my information from spirit land for my concept of the philosophy of a future life, my confusion would long since have become so hopeless as to have led me either into crass materialism on the one hand, or to have driven me into the vestibule of an insane asylum on the other hand.

The Biblical portrayal of the future life and the future home of the salvaged mortals from this planet is certainly a more cheerful picture than that which is depicted in Raymond's revelations. The concept of orthodox Christianity is certainly superior, with its golden New Jerusalem, to the melancholy spectacle that Raymond paints of his brick house, muddy streets, odorous effluvia, and unspeakable manure.

#### 5. MY OWN CONCLUSIONS

Spiritualism is not a matter which can be finally adjudged in the experimental laboratory. Investigations extending over a period of twenty-five years have convinced me that more than nine-tenths of all so-called

spiritualistic phenomena are purely fraudulent, sheer chicanery and trickery; and even if we were willing to admit that in certain rare cases real phenomena are produced in the name of spiritualism, we would have to confess that, as yet, we have not met such genuine manifestations. After all, spiritistic (genuine) manifestations are beyond the pale of scientific investigation. They are problems in theology and religion.

The mediums have failed to pass the real tests. They have failed to meet the conditions which are required by science to establish their claims. They have failed, when brought face to face with conditions that would permit the production of manifestations of real evidential value.

It would seem the time had come when intelligent human beings might indulge the hope of survival after death without exposing themselves to the sophistries and delusions of so-called spiritualism. It would seem that modern science would afford us an ample basis on which modern man could securely rest and upon which he could safely entertain religious beliefs and indulge in the hope of immortality, without the necessity and danger of exposure to the flagrant deceptions of occultism and spiritism.

It would seem that it might be possible for intelligent men and women to indulge in the hope of survival after death, to study psychic phenomena, and to investigate the unusual and the extraordinary, without having to



commit themselves, as it were, in advance, to those dogmas and beliefs which render it almost inevitable that ere their researches are finished they shall find themselves landed squarely into the ranks of the occultists or spiritualists.

What, then, are the net end results of spiritualism, taken as a whole? What is its influence upon the individual who seeks help and comfort at its shrines? The net results of spiritualism upon the people as a whole would be difficult to estimate. No doubt there are thousands of earnest souls who believe that they have been led nearer to God, and who look upon spiritualism and upon spiritistic teachings as a means whereby they have been delivered from benighted materialism. No doubt many of the recent converts to spiritualism feel that they have, in accepting its tenets, come out of darkness into light, but it has been my observation, in those cases which I have been privileged to study over a long period of years, that the results of spiritualism are highly unfortunate. They have led to disappointment, misfortune, sorrow, and in many cases to insanity.

I remember, years ago, when a well-known medium had put me in contact with the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, who spent the time discussing two or three trivial things with me, having to do with something I had lost, instead of giving the world a second Gettysburg address. Anyone who knew anything of the life and

work of Abraham Lincoln would know that I was not talking with his spirit — as I well knew it. If the spirits of these great men of bygone ages could be called up, it stands to reason that we would hear something characteristic of them. Who can imagine the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt coming up at a seance, and indulging in the frivolous patter that these mediums seek to portray from time to time as they juggle with these spirits of well-known departed individuals? And yet there is a fascination about the whole thing that becomes supremely attractive to many seemingly intelligent persons — men who have the brains to be editors, lawyers, doctors, preachers, psychologists, and scientists.

#### 6. THE STORY SUMMARIZED

To summarize our examination of spiritualism, then, we find that the belief of the living in their ability to communicate with the dead is a very ancient one. From the earliest dawn of civilization we find spiritualism practiced under first one guise and then another, known by numerous names in various ages.

We find that modern spiritism probably had its initial impetus with the teachings of Swedenborg; that spiritualism as an organized religion, promoted and fostered by commercial mediumship, had its origin with the Fox sisters in the state of New York in 1848; and that it spread rapidly over the English speaking

world; that we have had recurrent waves of it in every generation — once every twenty-five or thirty years; that repeated exposure of its more palpable frauds has led to a gradual improvement of its technique and an elimination of its grosser fraudulent practices.

We have seen how spiritualism grew up in America round the Reverend Moses, and in England about the medium, Home. We have further traced, decade by decade, the rise and fall of famous mediums, beginning with Slade, the slate writer, and embracing a sordid procession of mediumistic frauds, ending in the more recent grotesque exposure of Eusapia Palladino, the classic Italian medium.

In no case have the physical manifestations of spiritism passed the tests of science. Numerous tempting rewards of money are still available in this country and in Europe for any medium who can prove his ability to produce physical manifestations due entirely to spirit agencies.

We have discussed and disclosed the tricks of the seance room — how voices are produced and talking trumpets are operated. Herein are found exposed the methods whereby mediums produce lights, spirit robes, read sealed writings, write on sealed slates, and so on down through the whole mechanical mess of tricks and tricksters, including the ouija board, materializations, spirit photographs, spirit paintings, clairvoyance and fortune telling. The whole thing is clearly shown and



conclusively proved to be fraud. I am prepared, finally and deliberately, after a quarter of a century of study, observation, and personal experience with mediums, psychics, and sensitives, to record it as my deliberate opinion that all of the physical manifestations of spiritualism are a fraud. I do not believe that discarnate spirits are in any way connected with this phase of the cult, neither do I believe that spiritualism in its physical manifestations is the work of the devil, or of any other sort of evil spirit, but that it is a work of pure and undefiled legerdemain.

As regards the psychic manifestations of spiritualism, I have endeavored first to show how well known and accepted principles of human psychology are adequate fully to explain and account for practically all of the psychic manifestations brought forward in the name of spiritualism. I have shown that in all these cases which I have personally investigated, and which have been under my professional care — these psychically abnormal individuals ranging from clairvoyants and sensitives down through all sorts of mediums to the borderline of the insanities — the psychological hypothesis is fully adequate in every way, satisfactorily to explain the psychic phenomena of this whole group of patients, mediums, and other sorts of psychics.

Of course I cannot be scientifically certain that evil ghosts and vagabond spirits, or some other agency of His Satanic Majesty, may not be at the bottom of cer-

tain rare cases of psychic phenomena brought forward under the guise of spiritism. I say, I cannot, as a scientist, settle this question. It may be true that in some cases the devils are in league with the mediums, and cunningly assist them in perpetrating some of the psychic phenomena which they bring forward in the name of spiritualism. But while I admit the possibility of some sort of connection between spiritualism and demonism, I desire emphatically to record that I have not personally investigated the case of any medium, or other psychic, professing to be a channel of communication between the living and the dead, where I have been in the least inclined to resort to this hypothesis in order to account for the phenomena observed. In those cases coming under my personal observation, in practically every instance, I have been able in my own mind to reach conclusions which were adequately supported by the known truths, facts, and experiences of modern psychology.

Double personality and dissociation have served to explain many things otherwise mysterious to the present generation. No longer are we in doubt as to the nature of many of the peculiar psychic manifestations on record from ancient times down to the present moment. Even the connection of our dream life, with religion and spiritism, has been more or less fully explained by recent psychologic developments.

Trances, visions, and speaking with tongues, so far

as I have studied these phenomena, are fully explained by well-known and established psychologic data. Again, I would distinctly disclaim all intention of discussing or commenting upon the genuine Seers of either ancient or modern times. The prophets of the Almighty are not under discussion in this thesis. If there be those who had visions in the olden time, who were the voice of "One crying in the wilderness;" and if there be those who have visions in modern times (and I have met a few of this sort who were very difficult to understand and adequately explain on purely psychologic grounds) I say, if there be those who have seen a vision in our day and generation, it is farthest from our purpose either to judge or stigmatize them. But again, I hasten to record the fact that those few cases of psychic phenomena coming under my observation, which might possibly be of supernatural origin, had nothing whatever in common with spiritualism. In fact, I may say that they were more or less actively anti-spiritualistic, and therefore their presentation or study does not concern us in this work.

The employment of either hypnotism or the methods of psychoanalysis, insofar as these methods have been applied to mediums, has served to show that their spirits or images originate in their own subconscious minds; that they are self-deceived humans; that there is nothing supernatural about the ghosts they see or the messages they purport to receive; that the whole



thing is a trick made possible by the subconscious — by means of the well-known psychic laws of mental transference and psychic projection.

As to the moral and ethical standing of mediums, the less said the better. The whole movement has miserably failed in contributing to progress and the advancement of the spiritual aspects of modern civilization. The rhetoric of the mediums is puerile and silly. In comparison with the masterpieces of sacred and profane literature spiritualistic ebullitions are contemptible. The ethical standing and moral status of the whole business, when weighed in the balance, is found to be sadly wanting.

We have seen that we are now in the midst of a spiritistic wave, due to the fact, on the one hand, that it has been thirty years or more since we have had such a revival of spiritualism, and on the other, to the monumental loss of life in the recent World War, which has forced tens of thousands of bereaved people to turn their eyes toward the world beyond the grave and to long, if such a thing is possible, to communicate with their loved ones who have so recently and so suddenly passed into the Great Beyond.

We have further noted that, with the possible exception of Sir Oliver Lodge, no real scientists today are dyed-in-the-wool spiritualists, and even Sir Oliver, in his book *Raymond*, while personally and sentimentally endorsing the thing, seeks as it were, subconsciously, to

make the reservations of a scientist as to sponsoring the thing in its ultimate analysis. We have seen that science has not accepted, and does not accept, or endorse, spiritualism.

















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